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THE GREAT COMMISSION

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

SERMONS ON OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT SUBJECTS.

Edited by HERBERT MORTIMER LUCKOCK, D.D.,
One of his Examining Chaplains.

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THE GREAT COMMISSION

TWELVE ADDRESSES ON
THE ORDINAL

BY

JAMES RUSSELL WOODFORD, D.D.

SOMETIME LORD BISHOP OF ELY

EDITED

With an Introduction on the Ordinations
of his Episcopate

BY

HERBERT MORTIMER LUCKOCK, D.D.

ONE OF HIS EXAMINING CHAPLAINS

FIFTH IMPRESSION

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ἀναμιμνήσκω σε ἀναζωπυρεῖν τὸ χάρισμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅ ἐστιν ἐν σοὶ διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν μου.

"I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."—2 Tim. i. 6.

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INTRODUCTION.

The great Ecclesiastical Movement of 1833, while it produced an almost immediate effect upon the Public Worship of the Church, and quickened into activity her Sacramental System, was slow to bring about any material improvement in the observance of the Ember Seasons and the mode of conducting Ordinations. Probably the first start was made by the foundation of Theological Colleges at Chichester and Wells. At the latter especially, under the fostering care of its first Principal, Mr. Pinder, men were indoctrinated with juster views of the responsibility of the Ministerial Life, and taught to realize the imperative necessity of a course of special preparatory discipline and devotional exercise before undertaking the Office. No doubt the influence of men trained in such a school, and going forth

under a deep sense of the burden to be laid upon them, made itself felt from time to time at the several Ordinations; but, I believe, no Bishop succeeded, as a rule, in imparting a spirit of true devotion into the mode of spending the days immediately preceding Ordination before Bishop Wilberforce. At all events, there can be no doubt that he was the first to lift the whole surroundings of the Ordinance to a high spiritual level; and his labours in this direction were so generally recognized, that to be ordained at Cuddesdon came to be regarded as a much-coveted privilege by the more earnest candidates for Holy Orders.

In that part of his Biography which describes his Ordinations, the system prevailing at the time when he entered upon his Episcopate is thus graphically described:[1] "The candidates brought together for examination about the middle of the Ember week were lodged in the various hotels of the Cathedral city, under no discipline, with no aids to devotion, with no hint that they had been assembled for any other purpose than to

[1] Bishop Woodford, in vol. i. p. 330.

test their knowledge of certain books. A single Charge was delivered to them by the Bishop on the Saturday afternoon, sometimes in a drawing-room, sometimes in a school-room, which had been used as the place of examination. Possibly the Bishop appeared once or twice whilst the Candidates were writing their papers; but there was no private communication between him and them. Of their individual characters, modes of thought, motives in seeking Holy Orders, he had no knowledge. It is hardly matter of surprise that such a gathering together of young men degenerated, after the hours of examination were over, into a pleasant reunion of University contemporaries; that the evenings, during which they were left to themselves, became evenings of social enjoyment, rather than intervals of solemn thought and retirement. This is not an exaggerated picture, as many of the elder clergy can testify from their own experience. That to the younger it may appear a caricature, gives an idea of the happy change which, in this respect as in others, has passed over the Church. That change is, I

believe, mainly due to the Ordinations at Cuddesdon, as arranged by Bishop Wilberforce upon his accession to the See of Oxford in 1845."

It is true that he was never able, even to the last, to see his way to the separation of the Examination with its hindrances to devotion from the Ember days; but while so far retaining the old system, he did much to counteract the evils by his own personal efforts. The hours of examination were interrupted by Religious Services, and the Addresses delivered by him were so full of earnestness and spirituality, and so stirring in their appeals, that they must have made a life-long impression upon many who heard them. After the lapse of a quarter of a century, I can recall most vividly the effect produced by the words that he spoke in his Chapel on the eve of my own Ordination.

I venture to think that it was a mark of his wisdom that he abandoned the custom of choosing the preacher of the Ordination Sermon only from the ranks of Church dignitaries. Disregarding altogether the supposed claims of official position,

he selected for the office men who were known to be imbued with a strong sense of the reality of the Ordination Gift.

It was a further mark of his discriminating judgment that, year after year, and often more than once in the year, he devolved this duty on his favourite Chaplain, Dr. Woodford. Many of the sermons preached by him on these occasions were published at Michaelmas 1872, and they form a most valuable series; and I take this opportunity of suggesting that they may be most advantageously used, as we have used them in the Ely Theological College, for public reading at the Retreats before Ordination.

Dr. Woodford had fully satisfied himself that though the emotions may be easily excited at such times, yet the impression is too often quickly effaced, if it is only the effect of subjective appeals. It was to counteract this tendency that his exhortations were almost invariably made to grow out of some great objective fact in our Lord's Life, or the enunciation of a leading dogmatic truth. His chief aim was to awaken the Candidates to a

realization of their high prerogatives—not from the position that would be assigned to them as the accredited teachers and spiritual leaders of the people, not as centres of light and knowledge and personal influence—but from the unspeakably awful thought that they were about to be made links in a chain of Ministry that reached down from the Upper Chamber at Jerusalem, and recipients of a Gift inherited from the Incarnate God.

It was in his eyes the firm conviction of this unbroken succession of a Divinely appointed Order that was best calculated to create a deep sense of responsibility and to offer the strongest security against an unfaithful discharge of it.

The gift to be conferred by the Laying on of hands—that was to be the motive power in all their work upon the souls of men, that their safest shield from temptation to worldliness. It is all summed up in the final appeal which closed his Ordination Sermons: "What shall be your safeguards in this wilderness of probation? The Unction of the Holy One. Go back from

time to time, as years accumulate, to this Ordination hour—no hour of idle ceremony, but 'a very anointing of the Spirit.' 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' Here is the Unction. 'Stir up the gift that is in thee by the laying on of my hands.' Here is the Apostolic precept for the future. Try and let your whole after-life be, as your Master's was, a development by reading, by devotion, by labour, of the anointing which is yours to-day, until the High Priest's voice from the innermost place call you to Himself, and you give back the vessels of the Sanctuary to Him, Who now places them in your hands to bear."

It was no wonder, then, that, with this strong belief in the ineffable grace of Orders, when he was himself called to the Episcopate, to be made the channel of its conveyance to succeeding generations of Priests and Deacons, he determined to invest the Rite of Ordination with all possible solemnity. After his primary Ordination,[1] which was held at an irregular time and under certain

[1] At All Saints' Church, Cambridge, on January 11, 1874.

unavoidable disadvantages, he entered at once, in concert with his Examining Chaplains,[1] upon the formation of plans for attaining the end desired.

The first point to be secured was the separation of the examination in intellectual and Theological qualifications from the Ember days. The knowledge of the evils of the prevailing system, arising mainly out of the excitement about the result, which too often disturbed the minds, even of the best informed, and absorbed well-nigh all the thoughts of those who were but inadequately prepared, or of the timid and self-diffident, seemed to make a change absolutely imperative, if the time immediately preceding Ordination was to be utilized for the highest purposes.

Such a change of necessity involved one dis-

[1] After his Consecration he appointed, in conjunction with myself, the Hon. and Rev. Stephen Fremantle, Senior Student of Christ Church, Oxford. He only lived, however, to be present at one regular Ordination, and to see the first beginning of the improvements he had so much at heart. After the lapse of some months, his work was taken up by the Rev. V. H. Stanton, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; and in September, 1878, the Bishop appointed also the Rev. Francis Paget, now Regius Professor of Pastoral Theology in Oxford.

advantage, viz. the expense of a double journey for the Candidates; and this is still held in many Dioceses to be insuperable. I should like, however, after the experience of twelve years, to bear the clearest testimony to its comparative unimportance. By many, as I have received repeated assurance, the sacrifice has been practically unfelt; whilst those who have lived at the greatest distance from the place of examination, and would consequently be put to the heaviest expense, have sometimes been the first to confess that the hardship entirely disappeared in the benefits they reaped from the alteration.

It is most earnestly to be hoped that, in consideration of the great interests at stake, this objection. which experience has shown to have been much exaggerated, will either cease to be regarded, or else, as an alternative, that some provision may be made for defraying the additional expense in cases where it is felt to be a burden.

It seems right, also, to notice that there are obvious advantages to the Examining Chaplains

from the time thus placed at their disposal (after they have satisfied themselves generally of the result of the Examination, and been able to communicate it with as little delay as possible for the relief of the Candidates) to make a more thorough examination of the papers, and, as has been the custom here, to give a summarised report to the Bishop, to help him in his personal interviews with the Ordinands during the Ember days.

The Examination for this Diocese has always been held in Cambridge, as the most convenient centre; and at its close a Special Service has been held in a Parish Church, and an address given by one of the Chaplains, in which the Candidates have been counselled as to the best mode of employing the interval of time—generally about three weeks—in preparation for the Laying on of hands.

The next change introduced affected the Candidates for Priests' Orders. The Bishop held very decidedly that the gulf lay not so much between the layman and the Deacon as between the Deacon and the Priest. Such a conception

carried with it a different treatment for those who were seeking the Priesthood. Hitherto the notion had generally prevailed that once admitted to the Diaconate, promotion to the higher degree followed as a matter of course, and at the usual time. In our branch of the Church the distinction between the two Offices has been minimised; a Deacon immediately upon his Ordination receives a license to preach,[1] and, with the exception of giving Absolution and celebrating the Holy Eucharist,[2] he discharges all the functions of the Priesthood. It has been easy under these conditions to argue that it is useless to prolong the disability beyond the statutable limitation of one year. But the Bishop of Ely realized very forcibly that besides the inherent distinction of Office to be observed in the discharge of public ministrations, vastly increased and more varied responsibilities are

[1] An exception has been made in the Diocese of Lichfield, where it is only granted upon certain conditions.

[2] Benediction, properly a priestly prerogative, is usurped when a Deacon performs the Marriage Rite; for the Service is almost from beginning to end one of blessing.

incurred through admission to the Priesthood. He saw that so long as a man remains in the Diaconate he has his Incumbent to appeal to in every difficulty or doubt, and thus he may get through his work in spite of considerable incompetency, without serious mischief to the Church; but directly he is admitted to the higher Office, he is liable to be placed in sole charge of a parish, where he may be required, without help or advice, to discharge duties of the gravest importance, either in interpreting the doctrines of the Church, or in imparting spiritual counsel to such as are troubled in conscience or perplexed by doubts. It was, then, under a full conviction of the necessity of providing as far as possible against such contingencies, that he determined to require a distinctly higher standard of fitness to be reached by the Priest than by the Deacon.

The plan[1] adopted to secure this end was to divide the Examination for the Priesthood into two parts, one to be taken at the expiration of

[1] This plan is in force at present in several Dioceses. The late Bishop of Ely was among the first to introduce it.

five months, the other six months later. The first of these was held for convenience in the neighbourhood where the Deacon resided, if he desired it, under the supervision of the Rural Dean. If a Candidate failed in either of the Examinations, it involved his detention in the Diaconate six months longer.

The advantages to be derived from the adoption of this plan are found to be both many and great. Foremost must be named the encouragement it gives to regularity and steadiness in reading during the first year of the Ministry, when habits are often formed which last through life.

Secondly, it affords to the Deacon protection against overwork in Parochial matters, and stops those piteous appeals, with which the Bishops have been made so painfully familiar, from Incumbents excusing their Curates for insufficient preparation on the ground of their devotion to the practical duties of their calling.

The effect is visible in the majority of the Candidates. Whereas the common complaint is,

that men do relatively so badly in the Examination for Priests' Orders, our experience has been that on the whole they certainly attain a higher level than in that for the Diaconate.

Thirdly, the plan obviates a calamity which not unfrequently deters Examining Chaplains from doing their duty to the Church—I mean sending a Deacon back to his parish on the eve of Ordination, with the stigma of rejection upon him, so calculated to impair his after usefulness; for under the present system his first examination is entirely private, and the second takes place before his "*Si quis*" need be read. Further, any insufficiency of knowledge shown on the first occasion is followed up by an intimation of the certainty of failure unless material improvement is manifested at the second trial, and such an admonition has generally led to the desired result.

It is quite true that the efficient working of such a system entails much additional labour upon the Chaplains; but those who undertake this office may fairly be expected by the Laity, for

whose welfare they are so largely responsible, to spare no pains to present for Ordination persons as well qualified as they can insure their being for the Office of Priesthood.

The mode of spending Ember-tide at Ely has been as follows: On the Thursday Evening all the Candidates assemble at the Palace, where they are lodged. The Bishop invites some Priest,[1] who is known to possess a special aptitude for the work, to undertake a course of Addresses and Meditations. Uninterrupted teaching from one mind, as in Retreats, has been found far more helpful than the varied experiences and exhortations of several persons, no matter what their individual qualifications may be.

Holding, as the Bishop did, such a firm belief

[1] The list of those whom he selected, in addition to his Chaplains, includes the present Bishops of Lincoln, Bedford, and Newcastle; Archdeacon Chapman; Canons Burrows, Freeling, Jelf, Lowe, Mason, Scott Holland, Sharp (of Horbury), Temple, Whittington, Yard, Dr. Gott; Revs. F. Barker, H. R. Bramley, F. H. Cox, J. Eddowes, H. D. Jones, R. R. Kirby, A. G. Livingstone, W. F. Norris, J. C. Rust, and F. J. Wood. Several of the Courses have been published, *e.g.* "Eve of Ordination," by Canon Burrows; "The Office and Work of a Priest," by Rev. J. Eddowes; "Spiritual Gifts," by Dr. Paget; and "Apart with Jesus," by Canon Sharp.

in the principle of Sacramental grace, it followed of necessity that he should provide for a Celebration each day. It was usual at this Service, to have a Meditation given by the assisting Priest, during which all knelt. The object of this was to insure its being of a purely devotional character. The aim, generally, was to bring out some phase of the Ministerial Life, in connection with the Blessed Sacrament. The first and the last words in the Palace Chapel were always spoken by the Bishop himself. In his opening address at Evensong on Thursday, he followed the custom of his old master at Cuddesdon, and selected special Lessons, so as to bring into harmony the teaching of the Old and New Testaments, and, founding his exhortation upon them, exhibited the continuity between the Jewish and Christian Churches. He taught us again and again to see how the precepts, the rites, the polity which existed under the Law, were illustrated and spiritualized by the Gospel—the substance remaining, the conditions alone under which it was prescribed to man changed. The awful respon-

sibility, *e.g.* of usurping the priestly office or of resisting the appointed spiritual authority, taught in the history of Nadab and Abihu, Korah, Dathan and Abiram, was shown to last on to the later Dispensation by the express denunciation of S. Jude against those who "perished in the gainsaying of Core;" again, the continuity in principle of the Aaronic Priesthood handed on from father to son, that which was carnal passing away while the spirit survived, spiritual sons being begotten through the Gospel by spiritual fathers.

Such and kindred subjects were almost invariably the topics to which he first turned the thoughts of the Ordinands; and handled, as he was wont to handle them, it is no wonder that they made a vivid impression upon the minds of his hearers, and lifted them up at once into a higher sphere, by the thought that they were to become heirs of a Ministry hoar with a Patriarchal antiquity, co-workers for God even with those whom He had called to the office for His Church in the Wilderness.

An examination of the following among passages selected by him for his Addresses, will illustrate what we mean:—Numbers xi. 24–30, and 1 Timothy iv. 12–16; Numbers xvi. 1–11, and 1 Timothy iii. 8–15; Exodus xxiv. 12–18, and Epist. to Galatians i. 11–18; Exodus xxxiii. 12–23, and Acts xxii. 17–22; 2 Chronicles viii. 12–16, and Epist. to Ephesians iv. 4–32; 1 Kings xix. 19–24, and S. Matthew ix. 9–13.

His charges on the Saturday evening immediately preceding the Ordination, were delivered at Compline in the Palace Chapel. The subjects were invariably drawn from the Ordinal, as the following pages will show, and were so arranged that each Candidate had brought before him, in the course of his admission to the Diaconate and Priesthood, "one of his own promises to his Divine Master, and one of that Master's gifts to himself."

Turning to another branch of his instruction, in connection with Pastoral Care, his varied experience in towns like Bristol and Leeds, and in his Gloucestershire village of Kempsford, was

found of the greatest help. It is usual to occupy a portion of the Candidates' time with questions upon this subject, and the Bishop's interest was keenly manifested in the selection to be made. Looking back over the papers that have been set, I can see his hand again and again; and in many of those questions which I remember to have been suggested or most readily accepted by him, it is easy to trace the same insistence upon the dogmatic position of the Church which characterized all his Sermons and Charges.

He disliked, whether in large or small conferences, discussions to end in talk alone, and in the evening, when all gathered round him to hear from himself and his Chaplains comments upon what they had written, he would manifest the greatest reluctance to pass from the consideration of any subject, however difficult, till he had reduced it to a definite shape and laid down some rule of practice for future adoption.

It was in these discussions that what was noticeable in all his conversation upon religious or ecclesiastical topics came out with marked

distinctness—I mean what one who knew him well has described as "the wonderful way he had of carrying every subject of serious talk a stage or two deeper than the level on which others had been regarding it."

To form subject-matter for his personal interviews, and to avoid mere generalities, he always proposed to the Candidates for the Priesthood, on the Friday morning, the following question, and was careful to assure them that what they wrote would be read by no eye but his own: "What difficulties from within and from without have you experienced in the exercise of your Ministry?" It was in his dealing with these that men were, perhaps, even more largely influenced and helped than by his public teaching. It was especially noticeable in connection with difficulties of a doctrinal character.

His influence was due mainly to three things, viz. first, his own firm hold upon Catholic truth, as it has been set forth by Andrewes, Bull, Hooker, and all the leading Caroline Divines, with whose writings he was fully conversant.

Secondly, he owed not a little to the unpolemical character of his mind; he never provoked or fostered a spirit of opposition—indeed, it was quite impossible to join issue with him as a combatant. Of course, if necessary, he was ready and bold to expose error, but it seemed most natural to him (and it certainly was most effectual) to do it by a clear enunciation of positive truth.

The third characteristic which stood him in such good stead, when appealed to for the resolution of doubt and perplexity, was a width of generous sympathy, which, at least in my experience, was quite unequalled. With this he combined singular patience and judicial discernment. Whenever his counsel was sought, his first thought was to look at the matter from the side opposite to his own, and I have often heard from men who were unable to accept altogether the advice he offered, that nevertheless they could not help feeling that they were both wiser and better for what they had heard. The very definiteness, as I said, of his faith and the

strength of his doctrinal convictions contributed greatly to the building up of those whose faith was weak. His whole heart and life were given in such loyal allegiance to the principles of the Catholic Church that the mere witness of it could not but help to the removal of doubt. I can recall not a few—and those men of mark and position—who have freely acknowledged that it was under his loving counsel and guidance that they had been first drawn to realize the holy Order, the high lineage of Christ's Ministry, and the full blessings of the Sacramental System of His Church.

To pass to the Ordination itself. However great the Bishop may have appeared at other times, his greatness always seemed to culminate in his conduct of this Episcopal Rite. From beginning to end it was marked by a solemnity that left little wanting. Ordination under his hand was the Act of a man imbued with the deepest sense of its intense reality; and the apprehension of this exercised its influence upon the congregation. The awful words, "Receive

the Holy Ghost," were on his lips a prayer of ineffable confidence.

Before the *Veni, Creator*,—where the Rubric enjoins that "the congregation shall be desired, secretly in their Prayers, to make their humble supplications to God for all these things: for the which Prayers there shall be silence kept for a space"—it was his wont to do more than call upon them in the formal exhortation. He felt the transcendent responsibility of the Ordination Gift, and tried to infuse into the people present a spirit in harmony with his own at the time; but, with a humility and modesty peculiarly his, he made the appeal by taking up the thread of the Sermon just delivered, and drove home its teaching upon the duties and needs of the Ministry with a force that was quite surprising. Often it surprised no one more than the preacher himself, for his words, when thus gathered up and enforced by the Bishop's lips, seemed to gain a power and directness altogether beyond anything that he had conceived. At these times there was something so sympathetic and

moving in his voice and manner that I have not unfrequently seen those, for whose needs he was asking the people's prayers, most deeply affected.

Then, such was the Bishop's earnestness that every one connected with the Ordination felt constrained to do his utmost to contribute to the solemnity and dignity of the Rite. Everything, even the smallest detail, was carefully arranged beforehand, and the Candidates rehearsed on the previous evening the processions and changes of position for the different parts of the Service, and the same were also marked upon a chart for after-consultation, so that no one's thoughts need be distracted by any confusion at the time, but that all should pass off in perfect order.

As a testimony to the effect, I remember well a distinguished Clergyman—since raised to the Episcopate—who had been invited to preach, going up to the Bishop after all was over, and saying, "I have never seen an Ordination till to-day." "How strange!" was the answer; "I should have thought that you had been to an Ordination in almost every Diocese." "Oh!"

he replied, "I have seen men ordained often enough, but I have never been present at a real Ordination before."

There is no doubt that the surroundings of the beautiful Cathedral, with its ample space for a somewhat elaborate Order, and the reverential rendering of the musical portions of the Service, greatly enhanced the stateliness of the Ceremonial.

On these occasions the Bishop always wore the Cope.

It was his rule not to ordain away from Ely, save under very exceptional circumstances. His first Ordination was held for convenience in All Saints' Church, Cambridge, of which I was Vicar at the time; and twice subsequently he ordained in Cambridge—once a resident Fellow,[1] at the urgent request of the Master, in the chapel of his old College; once at Great St. Mary's, a Missionary, whose Ordination in the University it was thought might kindle an increasing interest in the Delhi Mission, which he was proceeding to join.

[1] Three other Candidates were admitted to the same Ordination

No doubt this decision not to leave his Cathedral, which the Examining Chaplains used their utmost influence to uphold, created some disappointment in the Diocese. There can be little question that an Ordination in a Parish, especially where Church life is slack, does stir up a higher appreciation of the true dignity of the Ministerial Office; but if ever there is a time when individual interest may claim to supersede the general good, it is when a man is engaging in a Rite of such momentous import for the making or marring of a Ministerial life. The complaint is constantly reaching us from students of our Theological College, who seek Ordination in other Dioceses, where Ordinations are not restricted to the Cathedral, that they are sacrificed for the sake of others.

In how many places is the effect of the solemn preparation of Ember-tide, at least in a measure, dissipated by a journey to some town or country parish on the Saturday afternoon, and by a man finding himself lodged in a strange house, where perhaps, with the kindest intentions, the host has

prepared some social gathering, but where, at any rate, the bare civilities of life preclude the possibility of undisturbed retirement and devotion! Set over against this the continuity of preparation, unbroken to the last by any social or worldly distraction, and the closing of the Eve of Ordination with the last words of the Bishop, together with the certainty of the absence of all surroundings of strangeness and confusion to mar the impressiveness of the Ordination Rite, and the wisdom of the Bishop of Ely's practice can hardly be disputed.

Before concluding this historical sketch, I feel constrained to express an earnest hope that a yet further advance may be made in the observance of Ember-tide.

Perhaps nothing has contributed to the deepening of the spirituality of the Priestly life more than the introduction of Clerical Retreats, or "Quiet Days." The list[1] published and circulated every year is an indication how largely they are

[1] Issued by Rev. E. P. Williams, Barsham Rectory, Beccles, who will furnish all necessary information on the subject.

sought for and observed; and there is concurrent testimony from those who systematically avail themselves of such spiritual helps, in favour of their wider extension throughout the Church.

We, upon whom the responsibility rests of training candidates at Ely for Holy Orders, are so convinced that nothing else can adequately supply their place, that before the two chief Ordinations of Advent and Trinity a Retreat is always conducted within the walls of the College in the week preceding the Ember days—before, that is, they separate for their several Dioceses. For the other Ordinations, if there happen to be candidates, we provide that they may obtain the advantage at some other place.

The thought of enforced silence, which is an absolute essential for a Retreat, during two days at least, is often a cause of some trouble and misgiving; but it not seldom happens that just those who dreaded it most are the first to acknowledge its benefit afterwards; and as a grain of experience is of more value than much theory, I should wish to make it generally

known that there has been no instance in our College, since the plan was adopted, of anything but gratitude being expressed for having been permitted to take part in the Retreat.

We may not shut our eyes to the fact that, for those who do not attach themselves to Diocesan Colleges, there is little or no special systematic training for the Ministry in those habits of prayer and meditation and self-discipline which tend so largely to the formation of a saintly character.

It is of the utmost importance that our Clergy should continue to be educated in the Public Schools and Universities side by side with the laity—that, at least to a certain point, the utmost freedom should be given them in the development of their natural tastes; but when such a foundation has been laid, by contact with differing minds, as shall give them the breadth of sympathy required for their Ministry, some superstructure of particular training must be raised upon it. If the Clergy are to impress upon the world the Mind of Christ, they must be

made apt and meet for the work. The Spirit bloweth where He listeth, and under His fostering influence the individual may attain, in his own self-chosen way—in private study and communion, independently of such external aids as we would suggest—to the standard of holiness which all should aim at; but if experience proves that it may be more surely reached under a system of disciplinary education, the Church ought certainly to provide it.

When, then, as is so often the case, men come to their Ordination quite untaught in this school, it does seem an opportunity lost not at least to put them in the way of supplying the deficiency in their after-lives. I believe if our Ordinands were permitted to taste the benefits of a well-ordered "Quiet Day" in the Ember-week, that they would be drawn on to realize how truly helpful it is "to be placed from time to time in a position where the mere activities of their Ministry, the common lines of thought, the surrounding interests and anxieties, the claims of those depending upon

them, are altogether removed, and themselves to be brought face to face with God, each in his own personal, individual consciousness, as he must stand at last to give account of himself, when he will no longer be the judge of other men, but himself be judged all the more strictly as he has ventured to tread the innermost sanctuary of God."

Every one of experience knows that a Retreat, to be of any lasting advantage, must be prepared for; it would seem likely, therefore, that to bring Candidates promiscuously from all parts, with little or no knowledge of their previous training, and plunge them into an ordinary Retreat, would certainly in some cases be productive of no good and possibly of positive harm. But in Dioceses where it is known that a portion of the Ember week is devoted entirely to spiritual exercises, men might look forward to spending, at least, the last day "in Retreat;" and there would be no difficulty in providing a fair amount of preparation, both by the public Addresses and in the private interviews of the preceding days.

To set apart, then, under the ordinary rules of a Retreat, the time from the last Evensong or Compline on Friday till the Ordination Service might well be tried as an experiment, and we can have little doubt that this, as all other helps to devotion at such a time, would be greatly valued, and bear permanent fruits to the glory of God and the increased efficiency of the Ministry of His Church.

H. MORTIMER LUCKOCK.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

The MSS. of Bishop Woodford's Ordination Charges have passed into the possession of the Theological College, which he founded, and which by will he left his heir.

At first there seemed to be some doubt whether they would come under the category of his "books," which he bequeathed to his Domestic Chaplain, Canon Evans; but as soon as it was pointed out that it would lend an additional interest to the College Library if the founder's MSS. were preserved in it, all private and personal claims were generously waived.

The Bishop's Chaplains during his lifetime, knowing well how deeply the Charges had impressed many of those to whom they were delivered, urged their publication, that they might exercise an influence beyond the limits of his own Diocese; but, with that humility which was such a marked feature of his character, he invariably put the request aside. Not very long ago, feeling myself great disappointment at this repeated refusal, I gave him to understand that, in case of my surviving him, I should take upon myself to publish them, little thinking how soon the opportunity would come. Remembering this conversation, I applied, immediately upon his death, to the Trustees[1] of the College Endowments for their consent, and it was readily accorded. And here it

[1] These by deed are the Bishop of Ely and the Archdeacons of Sudbury and Huntingdon.

will be convenient to mention, for the satisfaction of many who have manifested no little interest in the subject, that it is hoped that ere long this publication may be followed by that of a further[1] selection of sermons from the large number of MSS. which he has left behind.

In editing the following Charges, alterations, verbal and structural, have here and there been unavoidable for the sake of clearness; but nothing has been changed in any case where doctrinal teaching was involved.

My best thanks are due to my brother Chaplains Dr. Paget and Canon Evans for assistance in revising the proof-sheets, and for useful suggestions.

[1] Three volumes of his sermons preached in Bristol churches, and one volume of Ordination Sermons have been published by Masters.

In giving the Charges to the public in a permanent form, it is pleasant to think how, beyond the general interest they are likely to excite, they will vividly recall to those who heard them the Ember-tides at Ely, and there can be little doubt that they will tend to a renewal of those solemn feelings which they aroused or deepened when they were spoken.

H. M. L.

College, Ely,
Lent Embertide, 1886.

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The Call of God.

"Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this Office and Ministration, to serve God for the promoting of His glory, and the edifying of His people?

"*Answer*—I trust so."

OFFICE FOR THE ORDERING OF DEACONS.

"Do you think in your heart, that you be truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the order of this Church of England, to the Order and Ministry of Priesthood?

"*Answer*—I think it."

OFFICE FOR THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS.

I.

The Call of God.

My Brethren,

I have reserved until this last evening what I wished to say to you, in order that the holy Services and religious exercises of these last Ember days might have their due effect in lifting your own hearts into a higher atmosphere, and so helping you to go with me with a deeper feeling of awe into the consideration of the great subject on which I would speak. That subject is contained in the first question which will be proposed to you to-morrow.

Let me remind you that the series of questions directed by our Ordinal to be proposed to the candidates, whether for the Diaconate or the Priesthood, constitutes an integral and most ancient part of the Service.

Such a series of questions is expressly prescribed by the fourth council of Carthage.

I would have you, therefore, feel to-morrow that

it is no idle form which you go through when you are answering the questions which I shall then put to you. The shadow of the earliest days of the Christian Church rests upon that portion of the Service. It is your solemn profession before the people of the principles, the motives, the purpose, with which you take upon you the Sacerdotal Office. It stands in the Ordinal like the Creed in the other services, and, like the clauses of the Creed, every successive question, with its reply, demands the most earnest meditation.

To-night I shall dwell only on the first question.

It runs thus in the Ordination of Deacons: "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this Office and Ministration, to serve God for the promoting of His glory, and the edifying of His people?"

It runs thus in the Office for the Ordination of Priests: "Do you think in your heart, that you be truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the order of this Church of England, to the Order and Ministry of Priesthood?"

Now, the main point here involved is the idea of a direct call from God to the Office of the Priesthood or Diaconate; and the inquiry forthwith starts up, What is meant by this?

"To have a call from God" is a phrase which has been perverted by fanaticism, and yet none the less does it express a real truth. Apart from the dreams of enthusiasm, distinct from the fancies of superstition, God does, we believe, utter His voice, and the soul of man hears it and knows it. Be it so, that the night watches are no longer disturbed by unearthly accents summoning us by name, as in the tabernacle of old, when the child Samuel first "knew the Lord." Be it that the Voice speaks not now to the outer ear. There are other modes of reaching the "man" than through the bodily organization; there are avenues of communication, by which spirit speaks to spirit wholly independent of these fleshly bodies. In such a way the Holy Ghost does, we believe, commune still with the human soul, and call it to a closer walk with God—call it, likewise, with no indistinct utterance, to adopt certain special walks in life, to abide at home, or, Abraham-like, to go forth to strange lands. We may not exaggerate, neither may we water away the language of the Bible on this point. And, therefore, ye who are about to seek the ministerial Office—I ask you, with a full belief in the reality of the thing, to weigh with me what it is to be called of God to this life, and, before

you answer the question to-morrow, to resolve thoughtfully and intelligently whether that call has in very deed come to you.

I. Now, we may define a "call" from God to a distinct profession, such as that of a clergyman, to be made up of the external and the internal.

Two distinct notes blend in that voice of God which summons us to a special path in life. There is, first, the consideration of our circumstances and position, our education and training, the inclination of parents and friends with respect to us. Take, as an illustration, the story of Samuel. First, you have the mother's vow: "O Lord of Hosts, if thou wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life." Samuel's boyhood and youth would be passed under the shadow of that vow. He would learn the solemn tale of the parent's yearning for a son, of the dedication beforehand of the son, if granted, to God's service. The Jewish tradition is that the miraculous Voice came to him in the sacred tent, when he was about twelve years of age. "Eli perceived," we are told, "that the Lord had called the child." But Eli, too, would remember how the child's whole life from his birth had, as it were, designated him for an extraordinary vocation. The

mysterious cry, "Samuel! Samuel!" which broke upon the boy's ear, was but the consummation of a series of providences concerning him, which dated from before his conception. And even so now, in weighing your call to this Office and administration, you are not to cast aside all regard to family circumstances, or mental temperament, or unfitness from bodily peculiarities for other avocations. All these are the manifest leadings of God's hand. By these He points out, as with His own finger, the path on which we should tread; and it is only a wilful fanaticism, in most cases, which puts aside these external specialities of our position, and allows them no weight in the decision as to what we are to do.

II. But, then, neither may we halt here. To these outward influences must be added (if we are indeed "called of God") a deep inward movement of a man's own spirit. Outward guidings must be met by a correspondent internal impulse. The inexplicable providences of God must be answered by a response from the bottom of the heart. "Deep calleth unto deep." From around and from within issue harmoniously the voices which constitute the summons of our God.

Let me touch upon some of these inward voices which should ratify the voices from without.

1. First, there must be a love of ministerial work in and for itself.

Attendance upon public worship, the conducting the services of the sanctuary,—there are those who take up these things as a "duty," irksome, but incumbent on them, and there are those to whom they are a present pleasure. So with the education of the young. Teaching is to many an intolerable yoke, to another class of minds a pursuit of immediate interest, almost independent of results. With some, again, intercourse with the poor is a source of gratification, bringing its own reward; with others, it possesses no elements of delight. Now, when a man is about to adopt a profession, to connect himself to a life, whose main work is to be "worship," "catechizing," "teaching," "communing with souls, without reference to social rank or educational culture," he is bound to reflect how far his gifts, the tendencies of his nature, are toward or against what, if he is ordained, must be his life-task. It is not enough that he can make up his mind to do his duty (as the expression runs) in this way. The duty will be done coldly, perfunctorily, if there mingle with the sense of obligation no love for the employment. Hence, let me say, the miserable spectacle still to be found

amongst us, although, thank God, not so frequently as formerly, of a clergyman whose sacred Office is only the complement to his character as a gentleman, who is a parish-priest for the sake of living, instead of living to be a Priest of God. These are the men whose houses are luxurious, but whose churches are ruinous and desolate; whose own door stands ever hospitably open, but whose Sanctuary gate is fast shut; who starve the souls of their people with infrequent services and rare Communions; substituting kindly benevolence for ministerial energy, charitable ministrations to the sick and poor for a constant feeding with spiritual food the flock of God committed to them.

I know well by what almost imperceptible gradations a man, well disposed, well intentioned at the outset, sinks from the spiritual guide into the mere kindly friend. First comes disappointment at the immediate results of taking a higher standard, want of sympathy in his fellow-labourers, the smallness of congregations, the fewness of communicants; then the failure of some who seemed once to run well, the example of elders in the Ministry who have handed down the evil tradition of a colder age, all weakening the purpose with which Holy Orders are received; and because of the subtlety

with which the temptation to lower the standard of ministerial life creeps on, I urge you, when sitting in judgment upon your own "call" to this office, to search and see whether, amongst the motives which bring you, there is a true and hearty love of the work which, if you are to be found faithful, must be your work from this hour.

2. The next element of a true call to the Priesthood is a perfect belief.

I say a perfect belief, because it does not seem quite true to affirm that a man must either believe or disbelieve. Practically it is not so. Between those who with unfaltering grasp lay hold on the verities of Christ and those who reject them, there is a large class; they have some belief, although it is not the belief of saints and Apostles, not the belief which makes itself felt in the world and leaves its mark behind.

For example, there is the belief of acquiescence. A man is born in a Christian country. With his earliest consciousness he finds the network of Christianity enveloping him. His first affections are enlisted in its cause. The mother's teaching, the associations of childhood and home, all plead with him for Christ. As he mingles with the world, he finds that there is another side, that

many do not believe, that there are difficulties as to points of history and doctrine, that some have altogether thrown off the yoke and boast themselves in their freedom. Yet, whilst he sees their aspect of the question, the old influences of the old days are woven still around him. Voices long hushed rise up from the dust of death, and witness to him of the ancient faith. He perceives, too, the tremendous issues of disturbing the convictions of a people, and so he subsides into an acquiescent state. He has no rigorous hold upon the truth as it is in Jesus, yet neither does he reject it. Here, you see, at once is a kind of belief distinct from infidelity, but equally distinct from that which upheld Apostles in their warfare, and gathered the nations under the shadow of the Cross.

Again, there is partial belief, as distinguished from entire belief. Do we not see an unnecessary tendency amongst us to select some of the doctrines of the New Testament for acceptance and to drop others? Many of the fundamental truths of the Gospel at once commend themselves to our instinct. Such is the doctrine of the unity of God. On the other hand, there are the doctrines of atonement and of inspiration, of Sacraments, which baffle our intellects to systematize, and which are therefore

tacitly put aside. But, again, let me remind you that such a belief as this is not perfect belief, is not the belief of which you have need. The faith of Christ is so complete that those who preach it cannot omit any part without damage to the whole. To withdraw, to suppress, a doctrine is to introduce contradiction and inconsistency, and the suppression fearfully avenges itself. You may appear at first to be getting out of a difficulty, but you are planting others in your path. And yet more, this partial belief does not work. Christianity as a whole, with its glimpses of heaven and hell, its avenues opened by Sacraments and an authorized Priesthood between time and eternity, has stirred the heart of the world; it has riveted the mind of childhood, it has warmed the perceptions of old age, it has nerved Evangelists and Doctors and Confessors, it has bowed the rude heathen in every century; but nothing less than a whole and entire belief has accomplished these spiritual triumphs.

And because this is so, therefore, in proving yourselves as to your having a true genuine call to the Ministry of Christ, I would have you ask yourselves whether yours is indeed a "perfect belief," not acquiescent, not partial, but undoubting and all-embracing, whole and unmutilated, as to the

message which you carry to the world. If you venture to baptize, to celebrate Holy Communion, without a full faith in these sacramental Mysteries —indeed, we know that the unworthiness of the Minister hinders not the effect of God's institution— but it is a touching the ark with unhallowed hand; —your want of a perfect belief is a certain sign that you are not called by God to take on you this Office and administration.

III. But the question which I have to ask involves, as I have said, not only the call to minister, but to minister in the Church of England. The "call" which you to-morrow will have publicly to declare that you believe yourselves to have received, is to the Ministry of this English Church.

How are you to decide that such a "call" has indeed come to you?

You may apply here also the double test, cite witnesses from without and from within.

I say, then, it is not enough that you have been brought up within the English pale; that you have relations, connections, openings of usefulness in this Church. All these are, as far as they go, signs of God's will concerning you. But their testimony is not decisive. It must be supplemented by another witness out of your own soul. A "call" to the

Priesthood of the English branch of the Church Catholic involves a thorough, hearty acceptance of the Church of England's position, a genuine love of her liturgical forms, an undoubting confidence in her Divine life. Without this you cannot minister effectively, and ought not to presume to minister at all. If, on the one hand, you would desire to narrow her limits, to make her less comprehensive than she is, to exclude all who do not exactly coincide with your own views, then you have not drunk into the spirit of this Church; if, on the other hand, you, in your secret heart, regard her doctrinal statements as savouring of the bigotry of a less enlightened period, if you want to relax her definitions of faith, to teach more vaguely than she teaches, then, again, your heart is not whole with her. You can hardly have received her call. And it is most important that you should see this, for your own sake as well as for the sake of others. For your own sake, because the Clergyman who pretends to work a system which he himself only half accepts blinds his own moral eyesight and inevitably deadens his own conscience; for the sake of others, because a fragment of a system has no power over the multitude. It may satisfy a studious few; it will not overcome the world. And

I dwell upon this point now, inasmuch as from two opposite sources there flows a tendency to this half-loyalty.

One source of it is to be found in the admiration of the apparent power and unity of another communion, in its seemingly stricter discipline and more majestic worship. Another and contrary source of this half-loyalty lies in the liberal spirit of the age. It is doubtless a great grace to be able to see more than one side of truth, to recognize truth when held in the midst of error. It is a great grace to be kindly affectioned towards those who, often by the fault of others rather than themselves, are separate from us. But this sympathy does bring with it the danger of a lowering of our own convictions.

Depend upon it, my brethren, if we are to be able Ministers of our Church, we must have, not less consideration, not less forbearance, but a thoroughly chivalrous devotion to our own communion. And once more, therefore, I say, see to it that you have this; see whether you do love with all your heart this Church of our fathers, not as one amongst many bodies, but as the foundation of God, which has held this land for Him from the first, and holds still the sovereign right to speak to

this people in His name, before you venture to affirm your belief that you are called by Him to her Ministry, and accept on your knees her commission.

And now I close. I have sought to help you to answer a momentous question, whether in very deed you are Divinely called to this Office and Ministry. Here are the materials for your decision. Weigh them well before you come to that decision. The Ministry of the Church Catholic! it is a coast strewn with wrecks. From Judas downwards it is marked by the failures and the shame of the untrue, the shallow-hearted, the careless, the self-indulgent.

Yes; but I will not leave this thought as the last upon your minds. It is marked, too, by a long line of burning and shining lights—men who have won mighty victories in the power of that grace which comes with the imposition of hands over self and the world; men who went down to the grave the lamented of their own age; men who shall stand at the last, crowned with a diadem which no angel or archangel shall wear, the star-like crown which belongs to those who have turned many to righteousness. May that crown be yours, when the treasury is opened at the last, and the King dispenses to His servants every one the diadem reserved for him.

The Ordination Gift.

"Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands."

OFFICE FOR THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS.

II.

The Ordination Gift.

In the charge which I delivered to many of you last year, when you were admitted Deacons, I dwelt upon that call to the Ministry which every candidate, either for the Diaconate or Priesthood, is asked, in the most solemn manner, whether he believes himself to have received. It was the motive, the temper, the object, with which you offered yourselves to this sacred service that I then invited you carefully to weigh—what it is to have a call from God, to be moved by the Holy Ghost to take up a certain administration in the Church. Let us now change the point of view. What is Ordination? This is the question I would assist you to answer. You observe that the present subject is the correlative of the former. Not your mind towards God, but God's mind to you-ward; not your desires and preparation, but the action of the Lord God to you, who have a desire unto this Office and Ministry, and have made preparation for it, is our subject of

reflection to-night. When the Candidate for Holy Orders has, to the best of his ability, by prayer and by self-examination, ascertained his own heart in this momentous hour of his life, then what doeth the Lord God in him and for him? What answer out of the cloud is there to him who has taken his shoes from off his feet and in lowliness and fervour of soul draws near? Is Ordination a mere ceremony well-conceived by the Church, carefully arranged to impress the mind, but which might, without positive loss to the devout Candidate, be dispensed with, the form of which might be varied, if desirable, in order to produce greater effect? Or is it something more? and, if more, then, what is it? How far is it of man, so that man may remodel or abandon it altogether? How far of God, so as to penetrate into depths beyond man's vision, and with which, therefore, as having its foundations in a region out of man's control, he may not safely intermeddle?

Let me ask your most serious attention to this.

I. There are two passages in S. Paul's Pastoral Epistles which we may take as the foundation of the true view of Holy Orders, and which we shall see to have been followed up by the Church afterwards. Thus, in the First Epistle to Timothy, we read, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was

given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." The exact meaning of the phrase "given thee by prophecy" is difficult to fix. By some it has been understood to refer to the sacred prayer or utterance which accompanied the imposition of hands; by others it has been taken to allude to certain revelations as to Timothy's fitness for the office, which preluded his setting apart for the Christian Ministry, in accordance with what is said in the first chapter, "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou, by them"—in the strength that is of the high testimony borne unto thee by even inspired lips—"mightest war a good warfare." But however this be, there is no doubt as to the Apostle's meaning that a spiritual gift, a gift of the Holy Ghost, passed to Timothy through, and simultaneously with, the imposition of hands. And we find the same thought repeated in the Second Epistle, without reference to the prophecy. "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." I say nothing here as to the bearing of these two passages, taken conjointly, upon the question with whom the power of giving Holy Orders rests; the truth on which I would fasten is

the connection of a "gift of the Holy Ghost" with the act of Ordination.

And this has been the teaching or instinct of the Church from the earliest times. There is still extant a manuscript fragment of an Ordination Service bearing the name of S. Clement. Morinus gives it, as the result of a very laborious investigation, that it is beyond all doubt prior to the age of Constantine, and may be taken to represent the manner of ordaining in the second century. The prayer of Ordination may be translated thus: "Give unto him, Almighty Lord, of Thy Holy Spirit, that he may have authority to offer unto Thee a pure and bloodless offering." Observe only here the prayer for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Passing to forms of the eighth century, we find the essence of the Ordination Prayer to be the same: "O Lord, fill this Thy servant whom Thou hast been pleased to advance to the degree of Priesthood (*πρεσβυτεριου βαθμόν*) with the gift of Thy Holy Spirit, that he may become worthy to stand unblamably before Thee, to preach the gospel of Thy salvation," and so forth.

I will only add the present form of Ordination of the Greek Church. It is as follows: "A. B. is advanced to the order of Deacon or Priest; let us

pray that the grace of the Holy Spirit may come upon him."

In all these forms you see continually expressed, as the very essence of Ordination, the gift by God to the ordained person of His Spirit. At different times, in different countries, a variety of ceremonies have been added to the Service for "conferring" Holy Orders, so that you find ceremonies used by the Roman Church which have never been used by the Greek, ceremonies of the fifth century which are not traced in earlier times, and these again displaced by others of a later date. But one thing stands out invariable in all ages and all countries, an element of identity underlying every variety of superficial diversity—the Imposition of hands with prayer for the gift of the Holy Ghost. It does not appear that to the act of Ordination has ever been attached a distinct formula of words corresponding to the form in Baptism, which is always the same. The prayer in Ordination has varied in its language, but the ordaining rite has ever been moulded upon the joint idea which is found in the New Testament —the Imposition of hands and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The doctrine is thus summed up by S. Ambrose: "Quis dat, frater, episcopalem gratiam? Deus an homo? Respondeo sine dubio, 'Deus.'

Sed per hominem dat Deus. Homo imponit manum; Deus largitur gratiam."

Now, if this be so, brethren, you see at once how great, how solemn, how awful a thing the being ordained is. It is not the mere form of being admitted to a profession, as a lawyer is admitted to the bar, as a physician is admitted to practise. There are other agents than those whom the eye sees and the ear hears in the office of to-morrow. The eternal world is itself awakened into action by that which we venture to do, when, in answer to the invitation, you come forth to offer yourselves willingly for this work, and I and those then with me dare to lay our hands on your head and invoke the Spirit of the living God to descend upon you; for then we believe, in answer to that prayer and that appointed sign, if you shut not your souls by hardness and carelessness and unbelief against it, the blessed gift, the χάρισμα, of the Holy One is surely imparted to you, to qualify you for your Office, to enlighten your judgment, to purify your hearts, to strengthen you for the work in the Church of God which lies before you. "I will take," was the promise of God to Moses, "of the Spirit which is upon thee and will put it upon them." That same cleansing and enabling gift, which passed into

Timothy and aided him to bear the burden of the Church at Ephesus, that same gift which through centuries has rested upon the leaders of God's host—upon Cyprian, and Augustine, and Chrysostom, and Ambrose, upon those later ones who in far mission stations have waged the war of the Cross with the darkness of heathenism, or in quiet villages in our own land have in silent noiseless faithfulness upheld the truth as it is in Jesus, and watched to bring it home to rough and untaught hearts, never wearying of the angel-work of ministering to the heirs of salvation—that Spirit with all its power to lift you above your natural selves, to make you faithful Priests and Deacons, under the Great High Priest, He, let us not doubt, will put upon you, so that you in your day may be able to bear the burden of this people, as they bore it who are now at rest.

II. And from these general principles we may go on to clear up our understanding of the great words of Ordination in use in our own Church. "The Bishop" (so runs the rubric) "with the Priests present shall lay their hands severally upon the head of every one that receiveth the Order of Priesthood . . . the Bishop saying, Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest

in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands."

Now, I need not say that it is most important that we should attach a clear, definite meaning to these words: firstly, because they are the central point of the whole act of Ordination; secondly, because they are in themselves so precise and dogmatic, and withal so unspeakably awful, that some meaning, and that a profound one, they must needs have. They cannot from their very nature be words only; and they refuse to be satisfied by any meagre paraphrase. They involve, I would venture to say, a wonderful truth, or their use is an intolerable presumption. How, then, are we to understand them? I reply, on the ground of what has been already said, that the words are in their nature a "prayer." Ordination consists, I have shown, as to its essence, of two things. Every Sacrament and sacramental rite was described by old writers as involving the "materia" or outward sign, the "forma" or accompanying words. In Ordination, the materia is the Imposition of hands; the forma is no precise formulary as in Baptism, but simply prayer for the gift of the Spirit. Here, then, in our office at this point you have the "sign," the laying on of hands; and in the words, "Receive

the Holy Ghost," you have the prayer for the imparting of the inward grace. The construction of the sentence in the English is somewhat analogous to that with which the Bread and Wine are given in Holy Communion: "The Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul," which is, of course, to be taken as a prayer for such preservation through the appointed instrumentality. So, in the Ordination formula, in using the Divine words, "Receive the Holy Ghost," the Church utters the mighty supplication that to each one kneeling there may be vouchsafed not an outward mission alone, but a spiritual gift enabling him for that mission.

But you will urge, "If this be so, why not change the language, so that unmistakably it may be the language of prayer?" The answer is twofold.

Firstly, the Church would not unnecessarily vary the Master's Own words. She goes back with adoring reverence to the night of the Resurrection, when the great stream of the Christian Ministry was set flowing in the persons of the Apostolic fellowship. One alteration and one only, in keeping up the remembrance of that act, she has ventured on. It is written, you know, "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy

Ghost." That sign "of breathing on them," the Church has never presumed to appropriate. From the earliest period she seems, by a holy instinct, to have felt that that mysterious spiration represented the direct effluence of the Spirit from the Son, the procession and the mission of the Holy Ghost; so that no body of Christians (save, I believe, a small and remote Coptic branch of the Church) ever ventured to repeat it as a symbol.

But, drawing this marked line between herself and her Lord, the Church echoes on with a loving reverence, over every fresh band whom she enrols into the company of His Priests, the very words (a prayer it may be even on His lips; for did not He declare that He would pray the Father to send another Comforter?) which He uttered as He stood in that upper chamber in the freshness of His Resurrection Life.

And, secondly, our formula is indeed a prayer, but it is a prayer of a very special kind. What I mean is this. We know, as a general law of the spiritual kingdom, that God heareth prayer. But in regard to any particular prayer we cannot be sure that it is God's pleasure to grant it. What we ask may be seen by Him to be injurious rather than beneficial to us. He may perceive that the

very end we desire may be more easily attainable by the withholding than by the granting our request; hence the significance of the cry, "Fulfil now, O Lord, the petitions of Thy servants as may be most expedient for them." But it is otherwise with the grace of Orders. In this instance, we know that it is God's will to accompany the laying on of hands with the gift of His Spirit to those who are prepared for the gift; hence there is no wavering in the great invocation. The Church doubts not for a moment that her prayer will be heard—heard in the way in which she desires. She prays not, therefore, that if it be God's will He will give His grace to those on whom hands are laid; she knows that it is His will, and therefore, with a holy daring, she prays in a form which assumes as a certainty that her prayer is heard, so that (as has been said), "whilst as addressed to God it is a prayer, to receive it is a grant"—a grant, because it is a thing known, that, at the word of that prayer accompanying the sign, it is God's will that His gift should pass. And in this sense I would have you cast your whole heart into those words to-morrow. Be not afraid of them; do not try to reduce them to a lower level. In them the voice of the Church goes up to the Almighty King for

each one of you, in an intercession of the grandest, boldest kind, fashioned in our Lord's own language, and thus, as it were, appealing to Him to make them good by the remembrance of their being His own. They are no mystical form, themselves conveying from the ordainer to the ordained the gift of the Holy Ghost; but the ordainer catches as it were the Lord's words to the first Apostles, and turns them into a prayer of ineffable confidence that, at that moment of their setting apart, the Great High Priest, the Supreme Bishop of souls, will deal with these last, even as He dealt with the first who went forth in His Name.

And now what follows from this view of Ordination? Two most important practical considerations.

1. If Ordination involves a special gift of the Holy Ghost, qualifying the man for his task, here, surely, is a vast encouragement. You go forth on Monday next to your several parishes; a variety of new duties will immediately set in upon you. The sick have to be ministered unto. Before another week is over, you, who perhaps have hitherto lived only the bright, unthinking life of young men free from care, with no special burden resting on you, may be called upon to stand by some death-bed to help the passing soul in its last struggle. How will

you be able? How can you hope to be able to say the right thing at that dread moment, to waken up the lull, slumbering conscience, to help it to self-knowledge—to see the past in true colours so as to bring about a genuine repentance? How, again, can you hope to deal effectually with the presumptuous soul, so as to save it from the shame and confusion of going forth into the Presence buoyed up on a vain confidence? How shall you, when the body is weakened and the mind enfeebled, so as to be fit to bear only the tenderest treatment, manage to speak just the word in season, neither over much encouraging nor over much casting down? In what strength are you about to venture on this new life of duties so strange, so delicate, so momentous? Ah, it is here that the doctrine I have showed to you may well come in with a blessed assurance. Christ sends you not forth to this Ministry without a special gift to fit you for it. Go forth to this work, thoughtfully with preparation, by books, by counsel with others, but never forget that He Whose charge you bear will (this is the result of the Ordination grace) give you in that hour what you shall say.

It is the same with the making of sermons. If you take up this work aright, you carry with you

to the task "a gift" that shall illumine your mind to understand God's Word, and aid you to bring it home to the hearts of others.

But for this, it might well be considered a presumptuous thing for the young to admonish the old—the scarcely tried to offer advice to the experienced soldier of the Cross, the man of small intellectual capacity to exhort him of highest powers.

If preaching depended for its effect upon the preacher's acquirements, one can scarcely see how the work of preaching could be carried on. But if there be, indeed, a grace of orders, a gift of the Spirit qualifying him who opens his soul to receive it, for the work to be done, then the individual becomes lost in the power which has been entrusted to him; and again there is brought about a fulfilment of the prophetic words, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast ordained strength." "Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." So answered the boy-prophet to the Almighty Voice. What was the reply? "Say not, I am a child: for I am with thee." It is the sense of having been the recipient of a Divine gift which is to balance the sense of natural infirmity, which is to render us not self-sufficient in our ignorance,

but anxious, prayerful in preparing, bold and earnest in utterance.

2. And the other consideration which I would suggest as flowing out of the above view of Holy Orders is that contained in the Apostle's words: "Quench not the Spirit." Does, indeed, a gift of the Spirit verily pass into you with that laying on of hands? then ensues the heavy burden of cherishing, protecting, stirring up the sacred flame. Carelessness in ministering before the Lord, a presumptuous neglect of due preparation for the work of teaching, is a grieving and provocation of the Imparted Spirit. Every amusement which is unbecoming, even if not inherently sinful, has a tendency, again, to dull the Heavenly fire. The special gift demands a special guard, a special culture. Here lies the answer to the question, "Why is not that which is lawful for a layman lawful also for a clergyman?" Because to the one God has vouchsafed an additional gift to enable him to sustain a special character, and if he sustain not that special character, he frustrates the gift and defeats the purpose of the Giver. Sure I am that if we would win souls and build up the Church of God in our parishes, it will not be by identifying ourselves in habits and pursuits and life with those

around, but by manifesting, not by exaggerated statements as to our Priestly Office, but by a life differing from others in its unworldliness and its spiritual mindedness, that Ordination has been unto us more than an outward mission—more than an authorized appointment, even a true and real imparting of a gift of the Holy Ghost.

Diligence in the Study of Holy Scripture.

"Will you be diligent . . . . in the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same?

"*Answer*—I will endeavour myself so to do, the Lord being my helper."

OFFICE FOR THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS.

III.

Diligence in the Study of Holy Scripture.

The subject on which I desire to speak to you to-night is suggested by the following question and answer in the Office for the Ordering of Priests: "Will you,"—this is the question—"be diligent . . . in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same?" and the answer, "I will endeavour myself so to do, the Lord being my helper."

Question and answer are both prepared for in those words of the Exhortation to the Candidates for the Priesthood, "consider how studious ye ought to be in reading and learning the Scriptures."

There is, I think, something very striking in the decided manner in which our Church, here and elsewhere, upholds and sets forth the joint Divine authority of the written Word of God and the Priesthood. She is utterly unconscious of any contradiction between the two ideas. "It is evident," she says, "that from the Apostles' times there have

been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." She dwells upon the reverend estimation in which these Orders were held evermore; she declares their continuance to be so important that she will allow none to officiate who have not had Episcopal Ordination. She has made no attempt to get rid of the term "Priest," but has frankly and uniformly adopted it. And none the less, when in the very act of conferring the Priestly character, does she appeal to the Bible as the basis of teaching for the Priesthood which she perpetuates. She dreams not of any need of dissolving the idea of the Priesthood in order to allow free scope for the Bible, or of putting the Bible aside to give play to the Priesthood; and herein I believe she witnesses boldly and truly what the will of God in this matter is.

Hand in hand, neither opposing the other, the threefold Ministry and the written Word are sent forth to make ready in the desert of the world a highway for our Lord's return; the Bible, with its sweet and gracious sentences, its mysterious power to be company to the lonely and support to the dying, the very rhythm of its holy sayings oft sweeping over the departing soul like soft breezes in the desert; the Ministry of reconciliation, with its

awful charge to administer that Word of God, rightly dividing it according to individual needs, exercising as it were a stewardship over its threatenings and promises. We might *a priori*, have been disposed, as some have done, to regard the ordinance of a standing Ministry superfluous where there was a written memorial of God's will. Not so. Against all the perils which beset oral tradition, error of understanding, defect of memory, influences of time and country, of imagination and passion, the written Word is the one impregnable bulwark. Therein stands to all time an imperishable record of what God spake. The passions of men can write no change on that still impassive witness of truth. It is amongst us like the huge pyramids of a distant land—unchanged while all around is changing; bringing the past and present strangely near; hoar with the antiquity of forty centuries, yet fresh and pliant in application as though of yesterday. And, on the contrary, with a merciful consideration of human nature has Christ willed the setting apart, by a perpetual succession, a body of men to expound and to impress His Word—living, sympathizing agents, who should, with the physician's art, probe the spirit, examine the conscience, inform the mind, reprove, rebuke, exhort, exercise, in brief,

all that wondrous influence which man can exert upon his fellow-man.

How, then, we may best qualify ourselves to use, in our parishes, in public preaching, in the sick room, the great instrument, the spiritual sword, which God has put into our hands, is what I ask you now to consider with me.

There are three modes of reading Scripture, which as Clergymen I would press upon you.

I. And, first, I would say, endeavour to find time (you may certainly do so if you will) for a critical study of Holy Scripture.

The study of Holy Writ has been damaged by the excesses of two opposite schools: those who have scorned the aid of human learning, and those who have depended solely on it; mistakes equally injurious, the one leading to scepticism, the other to fanaticism.

Both these classes began to appear very shortly after the Reformation, under the names of Pietists and Rationalists. The Pietists sprang up in Germany, about 1635, and continued to flourish for about fifty years. Their principles of Scripture study have been thus described: "A class of persons arose, distinguished by fervent piety, practical religion, and strictness of life, who were impatient

of the restraints imposed by Confessions of Faith. In their ardour and enthusiasm they disparaged reason, theological learning, literature, and science as of little service to religion, and asserted that by their own inner illumination they were able to discern and expound the true sense of Holy Scripture."

These extreme principles produced their natural result. Just as in the fifth century Nestorianism produced the opposite heresy of Eutyches; so in the seventeenth Pietism, by its very violence, called up Rationalism. Beginning with arguing the reasonableness of Christianity, Rationalism attempted to demonstrate the doctrines of Christianity independently of revelation; then, applying itself to the Interpretation of Scripture, and leaning solely upon classical learning, criticism, and history, it proclaimed itself sent to shed a new light on the Bible, scrutinizing in a captious spirit the records of Scripture miracles, and wearying itself with subtle ingenuity to explain away those miracles as mere physical phenomena more or less understood.

Now, this episode of Ecclesiastical History, as it strips of the charm of novelty the attempt being made amongst ourselves to get rid of the Supernatural element out of Religion, and may show us that the Faith of Jesus Christ has stood, before we were

born, precisely similar assaults to those which are made against it now, so does it teach us the danger of ignoring human learning in the study of Holy Scripture, the necessity of every Clergyman considering it to be one part of the varied duties of his ministerial life, not only at the outset, not only whilst examinations are pending, but continually to the end to preserve the habit of studying, with all the helps in his reach, the Word of God. If we would be sound expositors of that Word to our people, if our teaching is to be such as, by its guardedness and accuracy, by its unexaggerated truthfulness, shall have no tendency to produce a reaction of error, then are we bound to make ourselves familiar with the language of Scripture, its forms of expression, the local circumstances which called them forth, the manners and philosophical theories of those to whom the Divine Words were first addressed. "There is," says Hooker, "no kind of knowledge in the world whereby any part of truth is seen, but we justly account it precious; yea, that principal truth, in comparison whereof all other knowledge is vile, may receive from it some light." Bishop Bull has a sermon to prove that even persons Divinely inspired did not so wholly depend upon Divine inspiration, but that they made

use also of the ordinary helps and means, such as reading of books, with study and meditation upon them for their assistance in the discharge of their office. "I add," he goes on, "that the Holy Prophets pursued the same course, taking pains to qualify themselves to be prophets, being for a long time educated in societies and schools;" so that, he concludes, even prophecy was, in some sort, a science among the ancient Jews, to which men were trained up by discipline and education.

II. There is a second way of studying Holy Scripture, which may be termed the Theological. The object of the critical study of the text of Scripture is to lead up to a full, precise grasp of the doctrines therein contained.

The necessary parts of Theology, of which a Clergyman cannot be ignorant without detriment to his work, are four.

1. There is, first, positive Theology, the gathering out of Scripture rightly understood a system of doctrinal and practical religion. In a measure, of course, this has been done for us by the Church. The three Creeds are a summary of Theology collected out of Holy Scripture; the Prayer-book is another and wider summary. But it is, perhaps, true that the Creeds only present the heads of

Christian Doctrine by which the Theological student is to direct his reading. The doctrine of the Incarnation, of Holy Baptism, of the Church—One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic—of the working of the Spirit of God upon the spirit of man in ordinances and out of ordinances;—these are topics, every one of daily importance, but about which I fear many who go into our Parishes really have no accurate ideas, about which many are content to hold only vague, hazy, unthought-out notions even to the end of their Ministry. If you ask how all this Theological study of Holy Scripture bears upon our own preaching to some country villagers, the answer is ready. An accurate knowledge of doctrine can alone ensure distinctness of doctrinal statement. It is of all things most important that every sermon should leave upon the mind a single, clear, sharp, definite idea.

"Here," says Dr. Neale, "we may notice a point of difference between ancient and modern preachers. The former well knew that an ignorant Congregation is capable of carrying away only one idea at a time, and dwelt upon their main subject up to the end: if they had been describing the torments of hell, so they concluded; if they had been speaking of the glories of Paradise, they took care that no after-words

should divert their attention from those glories. We," he says, "are apt to do just the contrary; we think it necessary to add something at the end of the sermon, lest the hearers should go away with a one-sided idea. If we have been setting forth the terrors of the Lord, we fear to leave off without throwing in something about His mercy as a kind of make-weight."

Now this, where the sermon is upon some deeper doctrine, such as justification, perseverance, the Holy Sacraments, very often arises from a timidity in the preacher's own mind. He is afraid to state the doctrine clearly, broadly, firmly, because he is secretly conscious that he himself only half understands it; not being quite sure of his ground, he walks hesitatingly, wanderingly; he guards and counterguards his sentences till, instead of having taught his people, he has only puzzled and confused them, and sent them away not knowing what the preacher meant, or what they are themselves to believe. And hence the value of Theological study of the Bible as a part of our continued work; not that it is to show itself in the exhibition of curious knowledge, but because it will make a man bold and decided in his statements, and therefore enable him so to speak as to lay hold of the mind of the

least instructed, and to leave on it a definite idea. The deepest Theologian is likely to be the clearest village preacher.

2. But besides positive Theology, there is polemical Theology, or, as it used to be called, "theologia armata." It is that part of Theology which furnishes a man with the necessary weapons for the defence of truth.

3. Again, there is moral Theology, that by which we learn a rule of conduct for ourselves out of the lives of God's ancient people. Under this head we have to remember two principles—that Scripture is a direct guide so far only as we are circumstanced exactly like the persons to whom it was originally addressed; when the circumstances are not identical, it is a guide only by analogy and with modifications. Forgetfulness of these two principles has led to some of the darkest chapters in Ecclesiastical History.

4. There is casuistical Theology. By this you are to learn how to deal with the souls of men, to resolve the difficulties of a tender conscience, to direct your people what to do in dubious cases and critical emergencies, to carry out, in short, the great prophetic precept, "the Priest's lips should keep knowledge, and the people should seek the Law at his mouth."

What a vast range of study is here! and for all these purposes God's Word is sufficient. That in exhaustible mine contains all that we require, if only we understand how to draw out its resources There is no case of conscience, no subtlety of heresy, no mystery of Godliness, which out of that Divine armoury may not be met, resisted, or maintained.

Mighty in the Scriptures! It is to be master of the secrets of time and eternity.

Let us see if there are any rules which can be laid down to assist us in turning that key and unlocking that Ark of God.

And I would say, (1) the Theological reader of Scripture must read all Scripture equally. We are very apt to confine our reading and teaching to certain Sacred Books, neglecting others as being obscure or of no present application. There is one special evil thence arising. These passages which are less familiar, when appealed unto fall with less force. Many doctrines find their greatest support in the less commonly read parts of Scripture. It results, then, not only that these doctrines have a less general hold upon people's minds, but that when they are enforced, and the neglected book or chapter is quoted to defend them, it produces comparatively little effect. The weight of any

Scripture in argument is imperceptibly diminished by our unfamiliarity with it.

A modern writer has analyzed an index of texts quoted by one of the most revered of the clergy of the last century, John Newton, in a course of sermons preached by him. He states the results thus: "From that part of the Bible which precedes the Psalms, Newton quotes very sparingly. The Minor Prophets hardly furnish him with one passage. He nowhere refers to the Song of Solomon. The Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, occupy the chief space as regards the New Testament." The writer then goes through the same process with an index of texts cited by an ancient preacher, and observes, "Here the historical books assume more importance, the Epistles are reduced to a lower level, and a marked contrast appears in the frequent references of the older Theologian to the Canticles and the writings of Solomon." This illustrates what I mean by using the Books of Scripture equally and evenly, in order to prevent our Theology and our preaching assuming a one-sided character.

2. Another rule is, that common one of observing the proportion of faith. It is by a careful collocation of the Divine statements, by observing how

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one is qualified by another, that we shall best arrive at truth. "Men err," says S. Augustine, "through not observing a mean; when they have begun to descend rapidly in one direction, they look not back on other declarations of Divine Authority, such as may recall them from that their purpose, and cause them to stand fast in that truth and moderation, which is attempered of both together."

3. Once more. The Theological student of Scripture must study it with a devout mind. Scripture is a devotional Book essentially; it appeals to a devotional spirit. Many of its arguments are arguments only for the devout-minded; many of its illustrations are of a kind to be profitable only to the pure in heart; many of its profoundest teachings are appreciable only by the quick intuitions of a willing mind. To the cold, captious inquirer, it is often dumb; while it speaks aloud to the receptive soul. The Clergyman, therefore, who reads the Bible only with an eye to the convincing the gainsayer or the maintenance of the faith, neglects half the use of his weapon. He has to minister likewise to the devotional heart—to feed the simple loving soul which is prepared with Augustine to see Christ everywhere, through all the varied maze of history, poetry, law, which make

up the two Testaments, to hear ever in deep undertones the name of Jesus; and so does it become a great part of the Clergyman's task, in the daily lessons as in his own study of the Bible, to train the ear of his own soul to catch those deep notes of the speech of God, and bring them forth as an instructed scribe, for the comfort and encouragement and stay of saintly spirits, which would eagerly answer thereto.

III. There is one point more to which I must, in conclusion, advert. You pledge yourselves to be diligent in reading Holy Scripture, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same.

What are these studies? As members of the Church of England, the answer is clear—the study of the great Teachers of the Universal Church from the beginning. We are not left to gather up a Theology for ourselves. We are to teach that which has been taught from the beginning. This is quite clear from the legal documents of the Church. Thus the Canons of 1571 declare that the Clergy are only to teach such doctrine as is contained in Holy Scripture, and such as the ancient Doctors and Fathers have gathered out of the same.

The Statute 1 Elizabeth enacts that no matter or cause shall be adjudged to be heresy, but only

such as heretofore has been adjudged to be heresy by the authority of the Canonical Scriptures, or by some of the first four General Councils, or by any other General Council, wherein the same was declared heresy by the express and plain words of the said Canonical Scriptures, or such as hereafter shall be judged or delivered to be heresy by the High Court of Parliament, with the assent of the Clergy in the Convocation. And the thirtieth Canon of 1603 hath these remarkable words: "So far was it from the purpose of the Church of England to forsake and reject the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or any such like Churches, in all things which they held and practised, that it doth with reverence retain those ceremonies which do neither endamage the Church of God nor offend the minds of sober men, and only departed from them in those particular points wherein they were fallen both from themselves in their ancient integrity and from the Apostolic Churches, which were their first founders."

It is most important that we should bear in mind these fundamental principles. The Church of England is not a new institution, dating from the sixteenth Century; she is the same corporate body which from the beginning has occupied for Christ

this country. There has been no break in the continuity of her Ministry; and in her teaching she throws herself firmly and deliberately upon the old Fathers of Christendom. Holy Scripture, and what they gathered out of Holy Scripture, is to be the rule of our preaching.

But if this be so, then you see at once how important it is that every Clergyman should have some acquaintance with the writings of those ancient men; that, at any rate, upon such points as the Ministry, the Sacraments, the Incarnation, they should know something of the mind of Clement and Ignatius, Irenæus, Augustine, and Ambrose, and the like. And this is no longer even a difficult task. Cheap editions of their leading works are published; many of their commentaries are even translated into English; and I see no reason why you should not make it your rule to have one or other of the treatises of these lights of Christendom always in hand—why it should not also be your rule, in preparing your sermons, to consult the commentaries of Chrysostom and Augustine as well as those of modern times. I can have no doubt at all that it is to such a use of the Fathers of the Church that the Ordination Service was meant to pledge you, in asking you to promise to give yourself to the

reading "of Holy Scripture, and to such studies as help to the knowledge of the same."

My Brethren, our Ministry has to be exercised in a day, when for its success, it is more than ever necessary that we should speak with no stammering tongue—when we should ourselves know accurately that which we affirm, and teach it clearly, definitely, and firmly. The incidental props of State support, State prestige, are being one by one withdrawn from the Church of this country. She is being every year more and more thrown for her stability upon what she is in her essence, upon her Divine Mission from Jesus Christ, upon what she has to dispense as His gifts to this people, upon what she has to teach as His message to men.

On the other hand, the spread of education through all classes qualifies all classes more than in past times to understand what is delivered to them, and stimulates them to be discontented with vague, meaningless utterances, and to demand accurate statements of what they are to believe and do. And let me urge it on you all to prepare yourselves to meet their demands, by yourselves clearing up your own ideas, by careful study of Holy Scripture and of the recognized Teachers of Christendom, both in ancient and later times.

Depend upon it, the days for "wordy nothingness" are gone. The intellectual distance between Clergy and people is, year by year, diminishing. If you would command the attention of your Congregation, you must, at any rate in Theology, keep ahead of them; and this can only be by recognizing it to be a main part of your work, as Clergymen, to give yourselves through life to the diligent reading of Holy Scripture, and to such studies as help to the knowledge of the same.

The Power of Absolution.

"Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained."

OFFICE FOR THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS.

IV.

The Power of Absolution.

The portion of the Ordination Service upon which, in continuation of previous charges, I engage your thoughts to-night is the second sentence of that most solemn form in which the Order of Priesthood is conveyed.

I have at other Ordinations spoken of the earlier sentence, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands." What is involved in the Priestly Office hereby conveyed is then drawn out in detail, and that which meets us first in the exposition of the power and duty of the Office is the following: "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." The words are an exact translation from the old Office book: "Accipe Spiritum Sanctum. Quorum remiseris peccata remittuntur eis; et quorum retinueris retenta erunt." For the sake of stating more definitely the object for which the Holy Ghost was

to be invoked, the Revisers of 1662 inserted the clause "for the Office and work of a Priest in the Church of God," by the advice, it is said, of Bishop Pearson and our own Bishop Gunning of Ely. Cranmer and his coadjutors simply rendered into English the Latin form; so translated, it appeared in the Ordinals of 1550, 1552. No controversy seems to have been raised with regard to it, even when, under the influence of Bucer and Calvin, our Reformation touched the lowest point as to ritual. This is the more remarkable as the formula itself cannot be identified earlier than the thirteenth century, and to this day is not in use in the Eastern Church. But it was recognized, even in those times of fierce debate, as being the word of Christ in commissioning the first sent forth in His Name, and as the fittest word, therefore, to be employed in renewing from age to age the same commission. "This," says Hooker, "is that grand original warrant by force whereof the guides and prelates in God's Church, first His Apostles, and afterwards others following them successively, did both use and uphold that discipline, the end whereof is to heal men's consciences, to cure their sins, to reclaim offenders from iniquity, and to make them, by repentance, just."

And yet, although the words passed unchallenged at the crisis when the Church of England was closely reviewing her Service-books, we feel, I suppose every one of us, that they are no common words. Evidently they run up into great and awful mysteries. First uttered by Christ on the night of the Resurrection, they sound like a voice out of the Eternity from which He had but just returned. They unite the two worlds, the visible and the invisible, in one joint act. The agency of men and the authority of God concur in fulfilling them. They would themselves, if they stood alone, suffice to cast over the Christian Church the shadow of things unseen, to link our feeble ministerings with mightier powers. And they are words, too, which assuredly have in them a sound of exceeding blessedness, of forgiveness of sin brought very near, not to be sought only amid cloud and darkness, not to be reached after by the soul struggling to draw nigh with fear and trembling to the steps of a Throne too awful for mortal gaze to be lifted up unto; but sent down from the height to the depths to meet the returning prodigal half-way, to stop his penitential cry, "Father, I have sinned before Thee," with the utterance of a love impatient of restraint, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

Surely, we should be sensible of a loss if we met not these words in the page of Scripture, if we disconnected them from the Pastoral care of souls.

Let us endeavour to approximate to their full meaning, so that, at any rate when they are used to-morrow, when you go forth to the execution of a Ministry inaugurated by them, they may speak more definitely and clearly to you than perhaps they have hitherto done.

I. Let me observe, first, that a power of some kind is undoubtedly hereby conveyed: "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." The words are in the Bible; you cannot escape them; there is not a whisper of criticism as to their not being authentic. Again, they are words of such a kind that they must mean something of grave and momentous import; they are obviously not light and insignificant.

It is impossible to put them aside, as you may many sentences, as having no special significance. If, on the one hand, we may not exaggerate their meaning, we dare not, on the other hand, reduce them to nothing. What we have to do is to find an interpretation which will satisfy them to the full as words of very pregnant import, whether regarded in

themselves or as the words of Jesus Christ—His first greeting to the eleven from the world beyond the grave.

Like every great doctrine of the Church, the doctrine involved in these words has a continuous and distinct history. It has been the strength and joy of humble souls in its purity; it has in its perversion and exaggeration ministered to superstition; hence it has suffered in turn neglect and denial, and has to be vindicated alike against the errors of those who have overstated and those who have repudiated it. Now, as the threefold Ministry of the Christian Church has its distinct shadow in the triple Order of High Priest, Priest, and Levite under the Mosaic Dispensation, so have our several ministerial works their own prefigurement likewise, and accordingly this office of dealing with the sins of the people seems to be a spiritualizing of that part of the work of the Aaronic Priesthood which concerned the leprous person. In Leviticus xiii. we read, "When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab, or bright spot, and it shall be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy; then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests." After prescribing certain modes of investigation to be pursued, the

Priest is to pronounce him unclean or clean, and thereupon to separate him from the congregation for a time, or to retain him in his privilege of joining it. Now, when you remember that leprosy was essentially and peculiarly the type of sin, in this sending the leper not (as Bishop Patrick says) to the physician, but to the Priest, and submitting him to the dictum of the Priest, to sequester him or to let him go free, you can scarcely fail to perceive a shadow cast before of what should be in after-times the relations of the Pastor of souls to the souls entrusted to his care and charge.

If you turn from the Old Testament to the New Testament, we find in the Gospels two passages bearing on this subject.

The first is S. Matthew xviii. 18. Our Lord is providing for the discipline of His followers hereafter, and He directs what is to be done with an offending disciple in the first instance, viz. that he is to be privately rebuked for his fault; what is to be done in the second instance, viz. that he should be reproved before two or three witnesses; then, what is to be the final step—a public reprimand before the whole Church; and if this breaks not the hardened heart, a casting forth from the Christian community; and thereupon follows a promise that

He will ratify what is done according to His will, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven."

The second passage is that from which the language of our Ordination Service is taken.

And now, did these utterances of our blessed Lord lie a dead letter with the Apostolic Church? Far from it. In the two Epistles to the Corinthians we have providentially preserved unto us the entire process of S. Paul's dealing with a notorious offender —the practical working out under his hands of the Divine commission to remit and to retain sins.

The fifth chapter of the First Epistle brings before us the sin of incest in one of the new converts. What is S. Paul's advice? "I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and My spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ"—mark the legal preciseness of the act—"to deliver such an one unto Satan"—to put him forth, that is, beyond the threshold of the Family of God, out of the region where the Spirit of God works, to where,

beyond the fold, the great Enemy rules with unbroken power—"that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus,"—not, that is, for the sinner's permanent ruin, but that by a temporary expulsion from the Kingdom of grace he may be aroused to a sense of his guilt, and by a penitential knocking at the closed door win readmittance.

The Second Epistle (chap. ii.) tells the sequel. The incestuous man stands there before us, broken down and repentant. The only peril is lest he should be swallowed up with over-much sorrow. The punishment inflicted had been sufficient. The time has come for the blessed work of loosing and remitting. Again we have the Apostle stepping forward, not as a mere man, but as one commissioned by his Master: "To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the Person of Christ."

Here is the great Scripture instance of the use by an inspired Apostle of what has been called "the power of the keys." And this Apostolic precedent was afterwards followed out in that famous system of Discipline of the Early Church, whereby, as it is said in our Commination Service, "notorious offenders were put to open shame and punished in

this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord."

This "godly discipline" seems to have involved two distinct parts: (1) Repelling from, and restoration to, sacramental privileges; (2) The reassurance of the conscience of the offender. The readmission of the penitent to Church communion was held to be in such manner ratified by the Divine Lord as that the restoration to sacramental privileges was the visible expression and sign of a "fact in the invisible world," viz. the replacement of the sinner in the favour of Almighty God.

With the disuse of external discipline, that part of Absolution which concerned the authoritative restoration to Holy Communion had no longer scope for action. But the other half, the reassuring the troubled conscience by the conveyance of God's pardon by an outward definite instrumentality to the contrite soul, was not touched by the disuse of the external discipline. This, as well as the other, was a power given in the great ordaining words, and it lasted on when the primitive disciplinary system crumbled away.

And this power of Absolution our own Church still claims. This can hardly be denied; for

1. She deliberately uses as her formula of

Ordination those very words of Christ which were ever taken as the basis of the power. Anxiously and with no sparing hand laying aside, in the sixteenth century, whatever was unscriptural and untrue, this she unfalteringly kept. With the whole history of the notorious abuse of the absolving power in the Middle Ages fresh before her, she dared not deny that, stripped of that abuse, it was a true power, given by God, and therefore not to be surrendered; because

2. She not only retained as her Ordination formula these wonderful words, but she provided distinct means of fulfilling them. For, over and above prescribing a Form of Absolution to be used in the sick chamber, and another to be used at Holy Communion (both of these being translations of ancient Latin uses), she composed a third Form, and directed its use in the daily Matins and Evensong.

And in 1662, the Rubric having up to that time ordered that the Absolution should be pronounced by "the Minister alone," she changed the word Minister into Priest, assigning as a reason that "by none under the Order of Priesthood" could some parts of the Service, *e.g.* Absolution, be performed, making plain and distinct her intention that this daily Absolution was no mere preaching of God's

forgiveness of penitent sinners, but an authoritative consignment unto them of such pardon.

What, then—for this is the point—is the real virtue or force of the Absolution which some of you to-morrow will be commissioned to pronounce?

1. Observe that the absolving words have no power without true penitence in those who hear them. As unbelief paralyzed our Blessed Lord's wonder-working power at Nazareth, so carelessness or impenitence deprives ministerial Absolution of all virtue. "Are all," says Bishop Andrewes, "within God's House or Church, thereby partakers of this remission? Is nothing else required? Yes, indeed, there is yet another condition, and that is 'repentance.'"

2. Observe that our Prayer-book gives no hint of any difference in the efficacy of public and private Absolution—of the Absolution, for example, pronounced over the kneeling congregation, or over the solitary penitent. Nor, if you reflect, can there be a difference; for the parties concerned are the same. The recipients in either case are those who repent. The dispenser in either case is the same—an ordained Priest of God. Whether there be lying under the absolving words one or two or more, it seems scarcely conceivable that the numerical

difference can affect their power. What alone can stop their force must be, it would seem, something at fault in the absolver (*e.g.* lack of commission) or in the absolved (*e.g.* lack of a right disposition of heart).

And still the question recurs, What is the force or power? I answer in the words of Barrow: "If Christian men, having fallen into sin or failed of duty towards God, do seriously confess their fault and heartily repent thereof; when the Ministers of the Church, in God's Name and for Christ's sake, do declare or pronounce to them so doing or so qualified the pardon of their sin, and absolve them from it, we need not doubt that their sins are really forgiven, and the pardon expressed in words is effectually dispensed unto them."

I answer again, with Bishop Andrewes, that the Absolution is an instant Absolution. "It is," he says, (commenting on the Latin text, "remittuntur") "in the present tense. There is no delay between, no deferring or holding in suspense, but the Absolution pronounced on earth 'remittuntur,' presently they are remitted. He saith not 'hereafter they shall be,' but 'they are already remitted.'"

It will be asked here, What, can we not be forgiven upon simple repentance without the instru-

mentality of this ministerial Absolution? Does not prayer, does not penitence, secure God's pardon? What of those who have no regularly ordained Ministry, who neither believe in nor avail themselves of this commission of Absolution?

My brethren, the difficulty is but a phase of that which meets us again and again. When we speak of the Gospel as God's way of salvation, we do not say that the heathen are lost. When we speak of Sacraments as instruments of grace, we do not pretend that grace can be no otherwise received.

Again I give you the language of Bishop Andrewes, "Gratia Dei non alligatur mediis: the Grace of God is not bound, but free; and can work without means of word or Sacrament: and, as without means, so without Ministers, how and when to Him seemeth good." All that is meant is that here is a Divinely appointed channel for conveying God's pardon, and they who place themselves under it may be sure of receiving what they look for.

And this is indeed the meaning of that clause of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the Forgiveness of Sins." It does not only express the truism that our God is a God that forgiveth iniquity, but the clause, following directly upon that declaring belief in the Holy Catholic Church, embodies our belief in

a particular way of remitting sins within the Church's pale.

Barrow, again, is very distinct here: "According to the intention of those who compiled the Creed, the Remission of sins there spoken of seems principally to design that Formal Remission which was consigned by the Church's Ministry, this being performed by virtue of a power imparted by Christ to the Church called 'the power of the keys.'"

They are, then, no empty words which I shall say to each of you who are to be ordained to the Priesthood to-morrow. It is no barren trust which you exercise whenever you exercise this ministry of Absolution. You may safely teach your people to value it highly; to feel that if they come to church too late for the Confession and Absolution, they incur a definite spiritual loss. Bid them gather up in thought their sins of the past week, and bring the mental list with them into church upon the Sunday morning, that, upon their devout confession to God and the exercise of the absolving power, the dark catalogue may be blotted out. I would have you too feel, when you stand up to pronounce the Absolution, that you are indeed employing a mighty Gift. You know not, you will never know, in which of those who kneel around you the mysterious

words take effect. And yet may you be sure that they fall not to the ground. God's ordinance fails not. It finds out some soil prepared for it, and from many a contrite soul will you have rolled away a burden and withdrawn a cloud which came between it and the sunshine of God's Face.

II. And here I might well stop, for the great words of your Commission have, I think, been adequately met in the interpretation given of them. Yet I cannot but be aware that there is another subject so closely connected with this of Absolution, that you have probably been waiting for me to speak of it; I mean the subject of Private Confession, or, as it is technically called, Auricular Confession. Let me, then, say a few words upon this.

And let me here reiterate that there is no necessary and exclusive connection (according to the teaching of our Church) between "Ministerial Absolution" and Private Confession. It is not necessary for a Priest to be a Confessor in order to exercise the power conveyed to him at his Ordination. It is not necessary for a Christian to practice confession in order to pass under "the power of the keys." Our Public Absolutions are sufficient as a true exercise of the power, a true

assurance of sincere penitence. Hooker is so plain upon this head that I must quote the passage at length: "Seeing day by day that we in our Church begin our public prayers to Almighty God with public acknowledgment of our sins, in which confession every man prostrate, as it were, before His Glorious Majesty, crieth against himself, and the Minister, with one sentence, pronounceth universally all clean, whose acknowledgment, so made, hath proceeded from a true penitent mind, what reason is there that every man should not, under the general terms of confession, represent to himself his own particulars, and adjoining thereunto that affection which a contrite spirit worketh, embrace to as full effect the words of Divine grace as if the same were severally and particularly uttered? The difference of general and particular forms in confession and absolution is not so material that any man's safety or ghostly need should depend upon it."

You have no warrant, then, to urge upon all pious people the use of Confession as essential to their receiving the "benefit of Absolution," or to teach that they are to blame in not using it, thus making the heart of the righteous sad, whom God has not made sad.

"Each morn and eve the golden keys
Are lifted in the sacred hand,
To show the sinner on his knees
Where heaven's bright doors wide open stand."

And lest, in the crowd of the general congregation, or for want of due preparation, the absolving grace should be missed by any, in the narrow circle of communicants under the special shadow of the Eucharistic Oblation, another opportunity is provided of Confession and Absolution.

"On the dread altar duly laid,
The golden keys their witness bear,
That not in vain the Church hath prayed,
That He the Life of souls is there."

And yet, whilst the Church of England, following, I believe, here most faithfully the lines of the Early Church, rejects the use of Private Confession as a habit necessary for all, there can be no doubt that there is a use of it which she authorizes. The clue to her principle in the matter may be found in the two well-known passages: the first in the Exhortation to Holy Communion, "If there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God's Word, and open his grief; that by

the ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of Absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice." And, again, in the Visitation of the Sick, "Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special Confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter."

On these two cardinal passages, observe (1) That the case supposed is that of a sinner who cannot quiet his own conscience by the helps of the ordinary ministrations of the Church. It is a special spiritual trouble, for which a special help is needed and provided. (2) That it is not with a view to Absolution only that the troubled soul is invited to unburden itself, but with a view to counsel and advice. In the instance of the man in health who can exercise a choice in the matter, much stress is laid upon the discretion and learning of the Minister resorted unto, clearly implying that a main point is that the sick heart should be dealt with by one of spiritual experience. "If," says Hooker, "peace with God do not follow the pains we have taken in seeking after it, if we continue disquieted and not delivered from anguish, mistrusting whether that we do be sufficient, it argueth that our sore doth exceed the power of our own skill, and that the wisdom of the Pastor must bind

up those parts which, being bruised, are not able to be recured of themselves."

I would have you, then (for such I hold to be the mind of the Church of England), not look at Private Confession as the necessary door of approach to Absolution. I would have you not regard it or speak of it as generally requisite, and not set it forth as the essential habit of a high spiritual life. It is rather to be regarded as a special remedy for a special sickness, an occasional medicine rather than as the ordinary stay of the soul.

But, on the other hand, there are occasions when the Church of England distinctly authorizes your people to require of you this spiritual help, and you may not refuse it to them. And, finally, remember that you cannot too much encourage your people to close private intercourse with you as to their spiritual concerns, especially the sick and dying. General religious conversation by the bedside is often a terrible snare; the soul of the sick person is only too ready to be content with generalities instead of learning to know itself, to face its own sinfulness and danger. I am well aware that it sometimes requires a struggle, especially for a young Clergyman, to enter upon religious topics at all, a severer struggle still to pass from the general

to the particular, to speak not of sin, but of the sick man's own sin, to come, in fact, to close quarters in the spiritual warfare. On the other hand, I believe, too, that our people are prepared for, and yearn for, a closer handling of their individual case than the English Clergyman is disposed to venture upon, and that oftentimes, when he has finished his prayer and has retired from the room, the sick person falls back with a sense of disappointment, as one who had looked for food and has been sent empty away. The Ministry of Reconciliation,—it may not necessarily involve in its private exercise the formal use of its absolving power. It can scarcely be carried out without a close searching of the heart and conscience of those who are given unto us in charge to educate not only for the life that now is, but for the dread departure from it, to train not only to appear well before men, but to stand before the Tribunal of God.

A Threefold Ministration after a Threefold Rule.

"Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and Realm hath received the same?

"*Answer*—I will so do, by the help of the Lord."

OFFICE FOR THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS.

V.

A Threefold Ministration after a Threefold Rule.

My plan has been hitherto, in these Addresses, to alternate as to subject each year, between the vows which those who are to be ordained make at their Ordination, and the grace which they receive from God by the Laying on of hands, so that each one of you, in the course of his admission to the Diaconate and the Priesthood, may have brought before him one of his own promises to his Divine Master and one of that Master's gifts to himself. In accordance with this plan, I now ask your attention to the following question and answer: "Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and Realm hath received the same, according to the Commandments of God; so that you may teach the people committed to your

Cure and Charge with all diligence to keep and observe the same?"

And the answer is, "I will so do, by the help of the Lord."

Now, it is obvious at the first glance, that this promise takes us out of the position of independent teachers, free to follow our own personal views of doctrine, to carry out our own ideas of what is good and profitable, and knits us up into an organized body, of which we are to be the officers and spokesmen. By receiving Holy Orders, we do in some measure, no doubt, forego our intellectual liberty; we cannot, when we have made this pledge, treat every part of Revelation according to our own individual understanding of it. We may no longer range unrestrained over the broad field of Holy Scripture and teach on every point just that which commends itself to our own minds. Certain authorities meet us at the outset, checking and restraining this natural freedom.

What, then, are these authorities to which we pledge ourselves to yield? I need not dwell on the importance of the subject thus opened. Is it right thus to submit to the dictation of another reason than our own? The answer seems to be that we are not called upon to abandon the exercise

of our own private judgment, but to exercise it in a peculiar way. Instead of reserving it to be called into exercise upon every point of Revelation, one by one, as circumstances bring these points into prominence, we are asked to apply our judgment once for all to the primary question whether the Church is designed by God to be, and so speaks as to be according to that design, our guide and instructor; and, having settled this in the affirmative, to sit at the feet of the mistress so provided and accepted, and receive from her and dispense to others the doctrines which she delivers.

And if you consider for a moment you must, I think, see that by this means only can you be effective teachers. If upon every question of doctrine and discipline it were incumbent upon you to search out the matter for yourselves, to investigate history, the evidence, the bearings of each fragment, so to speak, of truth, not only would you be in danger of being asked by the simplest inquirer questions for which you would have no answer, but your answer, when given, would have only the weight due to your personal diligence and ability in examining the subject. From the vacillations and contradictions and feebleness of such a Ministry as this you are saved by the answer which you will give to-morrow.

Your reading, your study, your prayerful preparation, will, if humbly carried out, have been the exercise of your reason, illumined by the Spirit of God, upon the fundamental proposition. The Church whose Orders you are to receive may be well taken for your guide, and the issue is to be your promise that, as she speaks, so will you speak; where she leads, there will you follow; "Whither thou goest, I will go. Thy people shall be my people, thy God my God."

I have said thus much by way of anticipating an objection which lies in the way of the general principle of a man, in matters of religious faith, submitting his own mind to any external authority. But now I go on to notice more particularly the authorities to which you pledge yourselves to yield.

About to undertake the care of souls, to train for an eternal life after death the spirit of man, how will you discharge this high office? On the one hand, you have to deal with the most subtle part of our mysterious nature, not the body and its organs, which the eye can see and the touch appreciate, but that invisible, immaterial principle of being, the seat of the understanding, the affections, the will, so transcendent in its capacities and its destiny that it has been held by Augustine and others that

it is not derived like our fleshly body by tradition from the first man through the process of generation, but that every single human soul is itself a new and distinct creation of the Almighty, a fresh work of the great Father of spirits. And, on the other hand, you have to apply to the direction, to the shaping and moulding this spirit of man, an instrumentality equally mysterious—the Revelation of Jesus Christ in all the sublimity of its precepts, in all those ineffable powers which constitute it emphatically the Mystery of Godliness. What shall be your chart on this mighty ocean? what your guide through the double darkness which envelops equally the soul you would minister unto and the machinery you would bring to bear upon it?

Three great principles of conduct meet you in the question which I have just read, and, as we shall see presently, the three are reducible to two. What are they?

I. Mark the primary rule: "Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded?"

We are here at once carried to the feet of Jesus Christ as the source and fountain of our teaching. None that went before, or that have come after, are

to supersede or to cast into the shade "Him." "To us," says Bishop Andrewes, "in the last days is given that, what we have, we have not from any prophet, though never so excellent, but from the Lord of the Prophets; not from any servant, though in never so great place, but from the Son of God. From His mouth we have received notice of God's will." And as the teaching of Jesus Christ is the source of all teaching, so it is the final source of the knowledge. We look for no addition to His teaching, not from philosophical speculations, not from physical research, not from material discoveries. Here again Bishop Andrewes says, "As we were not to rest in the teaching of any who went before Him, so there are we to rest where we are come to Him. As soon as His voice hath sounded in our ears, they itch no more after any new revelations; for 'in Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' 'God spake once and twice.' A third time He will not speak. This is His last time. He will speak no more. Look for no more pieces; fancy no more fashions. *Consummatum est*—there are no more to look for."

This first, but now observe how far this principle extends. You pledge yourselves to minister "Doctrine, Sacraments, Discipline," as the Lord hath commanded.

Now, these three heads comprehend, if you reflect,

the whole Church system. It is not a few leading principles of Truth which are here referred to as commanded by the Lord. It is not merely the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We do not stop there. Over and above the Doctrine and Sacraments, we have mention made of the Discipline of the Church. The Unity of Christians; the threefold Ministry, the Laying on of hands, the binding and loosing, the power of the keys, as it has been called,—these and the like make up the Discipline of Christ, and these are here spoken of as being an integral part of His will concerning us. I wish you very much to observe the breadth of the language of our Ordinal here. It is by no means uncommon for our Clergymen to separate between Doctrine and Sacraments and Discipline, as though there were certain fundamental truths, such as the Atoning Death of Jesus Christ, Forgiveness through His Blood-shedding alone, the operations of the Holy Ghost, Justification by Faith, which cannot be obscured or loosely held without a man almost ceasing to be a Christian; whilst Baptism may be dispensed with, and Holy Communion put aside, without any similar forfeiture of the Christian name. And still more does the laxity of idea prevail with respect to what is summed up under the term

"Discipline," the Order and Constitution, *i.e.*, of the Christian Church. Now, I press it upon you that in the question which I shall address to you to-morrow no such distinction is made. The Doctrine, the Sacraments, the Discipline, are classed together, with no break, with no sign of inequality, as all emanating from and covered by the "command of the Lord." No part is human; all is Divine. No part may be safely ignored or carelessly used. To be diligent in preaching, and slovenly in the dispensation of the Sacraments; to value slightly and to lead others slightly to esteem the Unity of the Body, and so to hold schisms and divisions of small account, provided only there be sincerity and zeal,—this is to disjoin what your vow, to be made in the Cathedral to-morrow, joins together, as equally of Christ Jesus. What so many call "forms" and place on a lower level are relatively of different moment; but absolutely they are all of supreme importance, as being parts of our Divine System. It is the union of these things, Doctrine, Sacraments, Discipline, which are consolidated together in the walls of the New Jerusalem, and contribute to their coherence and their glory. We did not make, we dare not unmake, by withdrawing or loosening one stone in the sacred structure. We dare not, first, because we

have not the spiritual perception to grasp the secret of the hidden connection of all the parts with one another, and we cannot trace the ramifications of the neglect of what apparently is of little worth. We dare not, secondly, because not Doctrine only, not Sacraments only, but Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline are in their origin Divine. We are to minister them all as of the Lord's command.

II. The second check upon the inconsistencies of private individual teaching is that "of this Church." Will you give your faithful diligence always so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments and Discipline of Christ as "this Church" hath received the same?

You will notice the phrase, "this Church;" for important questions will arise out of it. Is there any admitted antagonism between "this Church of England" and the Holy Church of Christ in which we believe? The answer must be emphatically that there is none. The Church of England is not a distinct body, but a portion of the One Body. The metaphor by which Hooker illustrates this may serve to fix the principle upon your minds. "The Visible Church is but one, continued from the first beginning of the world to the last end. The Unity of which visible Body and Church of Christ consisteth in that uniformity which all several persons

thereunto belonging have, by reason of that One Lord, whose servants they all profess themselves, that one Faith which they all acknowledge, that one Baptism wherewith they are all initiated. And as the main body of the Sea being one, yet within divers precincts hath divers names, so the Catholic Church is in like sort divided into a number of distinct societies, every one of which is termed a Church within itself, and these several societies, unto every one of which the name of a Church is given, must be endued with correspondent general properties belonging unto them, one of the chiefest of which is Ecclesiastical Polity (that which containeth both government and also whatsoever besides belongeth to the ordinary of the Church in Public), 'the discipline of Christ,' as it is expressed in the question before us."

Or take the metaphor of a more modern writer. "Time was when there was but one vast body of Christians throughout the world. It was everywhere governed in the same way by Bishops; it was everywhere descended from the Apostles through the line of Bishops. Thus it fulfilled the prophecy, 'Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together; . . . for there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the House of David.' But now all this

beauty is indeed miserably defaced. That vast Catholic Body is broken into many fragments by the power of the Devil; just as some huge barrier cliff, which boldly fronted the sea, is at length cleft, parted, overthrown by the waves. Some portions of it are altogether gone (where are the seven Churches of the Apocalypse?), and those that remain are separated from each other. We are the English Catholics, abroad are Roman Catholics, elsewhere are Greek Catholics. And thus we stand in this day of rebuke and blasphemy, clinging (mark these words)—clinging to our own portion of the ancient rock, which the waters are roaring round and would fain overflow, trusting in God, looking for the dawn of day when God shall save us from the rising floods, if we have courageously kept our footing where He has placed us, neither yielding to the violence of the waves nor listening to the invitations of those who offer us an escape in vessels not of God's building."

This represents very accurately our position. The Church of England clings tenaciously to the ancient rock. Her Creeds are the Creeds of ancient Christendom. She allows nothing to be heresy which had not been so adjudged by the ancient Councils and Fathers. In the thirtieth Canon of 1603, she authoritatively declares her intention not

to break away from the unity of Christendom, even in the smallest matters. The words are, "So far was it from the purpose of the Church of England to forsake and reject the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or any such like Churches, in all things which they held and practised, that it doth with reverence retain those ceremonies which do neither endamage the Church of God nor offend the minds of sober men, and only departed from them in those particular points wherein they were fallen both from themselves in their ancient integrity and from the Apostolical Churches, which were their first founders."

"In truth," writes Bishop Cosin (one of the compilers of the Prayer-book), "we have continued the old religion; and the ceremonies which we have taken from them that were before us are not things which belong to this or that sect, but they are the ancient rites and customs of the Church of Christ, whereof ourselves being a part we have the self-same interest in them which our fathers before us had."

So, again, Bishop Beveridge, "Whatsoever things had been at all times believed and observed by all Churches in all places, those things we have most religiously taken care not to abolish; for we well

know that all particular Churches are to be formed on the model of the Universal Church. Hence, therefore, the first reformers of this particular Church (it was not so in Scotland or Germany) directed the whole line of that Reformation which they undertook, according to the rule of the Universal Church, casting away those things only which had been either unheard of or rejected by the Universal Church, but most religiously retaining those which they saw corroborated by the consent of the Universal Church."

Of this nature, then, is the second check upon your teaching and practice which you pledge yourselves to accept: "As this Church hath received the same." They are not the self-willed rules of a small insular society to which you are bidden to conform. Our threefold Ministry, our manner of Ordination and Sacraments, and quasi-sacramental ordinances, our Absolutions and Benedictions, our forms of ministering to the sick and to the whole, of laying the dead in their last resting-place,—all have been not newly invented, but received by this Island Church with a filial reverence from the great Catholic Body of Christ. What she hath touched, she hath touched with a godly awe, looking carefully to see how far it had the sanction of the whole,

or was only some local usage. What she hath held and prescribed to us, she hath received with a loyal duty from the wider, mightier Body of Universal Christendom; so that in ministering Christ's Sacraments and Discipline, as this Church hath received the same, you may have full assurance that you are ministering them not according to the special uses of this little gulf or bay, but according to the uses and laws by which heaves and swells the breast of waters in the great ocean of Christ's Catholic Church.

And upon this system of Doctrine and Discipline, handed down from age to age, received by the Church of England from the Church Universal, the State of England has set its seal. What the National Church received from the Church Catholic, that the State hath received from the National Church. The Reformation of the sixteenth century took in England the shape of a Ritual Reformation. The doctrinal changes were embodied in the amendment of the Office-books; that amendment primarily, as exhibited in the first Prayer-book of Edward VI., was emphatically the work of the Spirituality.

Subsequent modifications not touching dogma may, in the troubled course of the next hundred years, have been made with more or less regularity.

But the final settlement of 1662 was, like the earliest movement, under God's over-ruling providence, wrought in a manner which brought out in the clearest way the principle of the Church adjusting her teaching and the State receiving it at the Church's hands.

And so we reach the full meaning of the promise you will make to-morrow. The ministration of the Sacraments and Doctrine and Discipline of Christ, —this you undertake in accord with the teaching of Jesus Christ Himself, as received by this Church from the Universal Church founded upon the mystic Rock by Himself; as accepted by the civil authority of the realm as the form of Christian teaching which it desires to have taught. What you go forth to minister is not, as some would tell you, a State-devised scheme of Christianity, earthly in its origin, earthly in its multiform arrangements; it is the Word of Christ, heard and interpreted by the Church of Christ, accepted by the Imperial commonwealth from an authority wholly and essentially distinct from itself, reaching back to years when itself was not.

And, now, from these premises flow several important practical conclusions.

First, there lies the only ground upon which you,

as young, untried men, can venture to stand forth as teachers of this great people. If your message were your own; if you were cast upon yourselves for what you are to preach; if, in speaking of Baptism, you had to set forth what you had gleaned from the Divine Scripture, as to the necessity of it, as to the grace of it, as to the responsibilities of it; if, in regard to that profounder depth still, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,—those Holy Mysteries, as the Prayer-book has it,—you had again to urge your view of the Presence of Jesus Christ therein, and of the benefits which we receive thereby, with what pretence could you stand forth? what learning is yours? what research is yours to warrant your dealing with matters like these? It is only as the mouthpiece, not of your own thoughts, but of the Church to which you belong, that without the veriest presumption you can assume to speak of things so infinitely beyond your measure.

And if this be so, then, secondly, whilst you gather strength from the thought of having the Church behind you for your support and stay, see to it most carefully that you neither go beyond nor fall short of the mind of the Church. On the one hand there is the use of certain expressions, of a phraseology which is not the phraseology of the

Prayer-book, although it be in itself sound, although it may have been used by doctors of Theology, it is not the phraseology for you in the pulpit, or in house-to-house visiting. You may do irreparable harm to your influence, you may close up many a heart against you, by the employment of language which seems (though perhaps it does not really do so) to convey to uninstructed or suspicious ears the idea of strange doctrine. On the other hand, never attempt to water away the doctrinal statements of the Prayer-book. If here and there sentences occur which cut across some of your preconceived notions, which apparently exceed the truth as you have learnt it, recollect where the sentences are, from what source they came, not from this or that man, but from this Church, as this Church again derived them from the Church Universal. What a cloud of shadowy centuries, of saints and martyrs, compass about those ancient words! They are the voice to you, not of one, but of many souls now with God. In the presence of those mighty speakers lift not up your puny utterance; feel that if you do not altogether recognize the force of what they have spoken, the fault must needs be in yourselves. Lift up your hearts to them, instead of daring to bring their witness down to your perceptions.

Lastly, I would say, reverence, love, be true unto the tradition you have inherited, "as Christ hath commanded, and as this Church and Realm hath received the same." Different provinces of Christ's kingdom have different tones of religious thought. Just as in various zones you have various phases of social and political life, so, in the diverse parts of the kingdom of grace, the Theological mind is different. Ours is the English school of Theology, distinctly marked, the result of race and climate, of our national and ecclesiastical history. It is not Roman; it is not Oriental; but it is not less profound, less dignified, less heavenly. Our great Anglican divines, our Anglican devotional writers occupy no mean place amongst Christ's witnesses. They have concurrently with other causes generated an atmosphere of calm, subdued, reflective, earnest religion as capable of doing God's work in the world, as the warmest and most effusive piety of other lands. Hold fast by that ye have received. It has given to our National Institutions a stability unparalleled in modern Europe. It has retained a singular hold, even in these restless days, upon the intellect of England, whilst the intellect of other countries has to a great extent shaken off the yoke of Christ. It has lodged safe in the Paradise

of God saints whose diadem will not be dim amid the crowned ones of the Kingdom.

Let your Ministry, then, follow faithfully the ancient lines: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Faithful Dispensers of the Word and Sacraments.

"Be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God, and of His holy Sacraments."

OFFICE FOR THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS.

VI.

Faithful Dispensers of the Word and Sacraments.

The portion of the Ordination Service upon which I spoke to those of you who were admitted Deacons in the course of last year was this question, "Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and Realm hath received the same?" I propose now to speak to you of the corresponding charge: "Be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God, and of His holy Sacraments." The sentence forms the very core of the Office for the Ordering of Priests. It is set between that most solemn Invocation of the Holy Ghost upon each person to be ordered, and the announcement of the Divine authority by which the power to dispense the Word and Sacraments is conveyed: "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The words themselves, simple and plain as they seem, have been the subject of vehement controversy. They are like some smooth and quiet hillside, far removed now from the world's strife and turmoil, upon which, in days long past, a mighty struggle has been fought out, on which the fate of empires hung. The shadows of a great contest between the Church of Rome and the Reformed Church of England hang around the sentence apparently so out of the way of controversial Theology.

In the ancient Ordination Service, used in this country up to the date 1549–50, the Bishop was directed to place the Paten and Chalice in the hand of the candidate for the Priesthood, saying these words: "Accipe potestatem offerre sacrificium Deo missamque celebrare tam pro vivis quam pro defunctis in nomine Domini Jesu Christi."

In the Reformed Ordinal, the Porrectio Instrumentorum (as the placing of the Paten and Chalice in the hand was technically termed) was omitted, and for the words just quoted were substituted those now in use, "Be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God, and of His holy Sacraments." Upon this it began to be urged, on the part of Rome, that no direct authority to administer the Lord's Supper was ever pretended to be given by the

Church of England, and that as she had not ventured to transmit, so neither had her Clergy received such authority. On the other hand, it was shown that the Pre-Reformation form was not heard of until the ninth century, that it had never been used by the Eastern Church, and that in the Invocation of the Holy Ghost and the charge, "Be thou a faithful Dispenser of His holy Sacraments," was included and expressed a full commission in the power of the Holy Ghost to minister the Sacraments.

"If," says Bishop Cosin, "we have all that S. Paul required, I trust we lack nothing; and certainly he that receives the Holy Ghost to the end that he may be a faithful dispenser of God's Holy Sacraments, receives all that power touching the true Body of Christ whereof a Priest can be capable, in a true Catholic sense, to make a consecration, oblation, and distribution of it; all which are comprehended under the name of dispensers." And the difference between Rome and England, and the reason of the change of the ancient formula of Ordination unto the new, the same Bishop Cosin thus defines, "Though it be good Catholic doctrine that Priests receive power over the true Body of Christ to consecrate and offer It upon the Altar in

a true Catholic sense, that is, by consecrating the elements so that they may become sacramentally the Body and Blood of Christ to us, and by making there a commemoration of that Sacrifice which was but once offered up for us upon the Cross, yet in the sense of transubstantiation and a real sacrificing of Christ again for the quick and the dead it is not so. This power—there was never yet Priest that had it but Himself, nor shall ever have it to the world's end."

So much, then, for the formula, and the ghosts of vanished combatants which flit about it. I turn to the practical lessons which it enforces.

"A dispenser of God's Word and Sacraments" —this is to be your office; this, the Laying on of hands to-morrow, will make you; the power, the authority, I and the Presbyters who shall join me in the Imposition of hands give you. That mystic act takes you absolutely into the ranks of the Priesthood of the New Dispensation. It impresses an ineffaceable χαρακτὴρ upon you, which, in the sight of God and the angels, you will bear to the end, with which you must lie down in the dust, with which, in all the burden of its responsibilities, you must rise again at the Chief Shepherd's appearance.

"A faithful dispenser"—this the grace of God and your own will and action co-operating with God's grace can alone make you; for this you must have, and yield yourself to,—the leading of the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might. Let me try to suggest some thoughts which may help you to be this good thing, "A faithful dispenser of the Word and Sacraments of Christ." What is it to dispense God's Word faithfully?

I. The earliest mention of the "Word of God" as a treasure to be ministered or dispensed occurs at the appointment of Deacons. The Apostles pressed with the care of the poor widows of the Church, appoint the seven Deacons over that business, and announce, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word." None of the New Testament Scriptures had, of course, at that time any existence. By the ministry of the Word, we must, therefore, understand to have been there denoted, "The Life and teaching of our Blessed Lord," both before and after His resurrection, all that He had spoken unto them while He was yet with them concerning the Kingdom of God, together with the Books of the Old Testament, upon which in all His discourses He had distinctly set His Seal. To us the phrase bears a larger sense,

and must be taken to include not only those floating traditions of Christ's doctrine which have been since gathered up into the Four Gospels, but the exposition of that doctrine by the Apostles themselves under the guidance of the Spirit receiving of the things of Christ and showing them, according to His promise, unto them. It is, then, the Holy Scriptures which, we are, in the first place, to dispense; and I know of no title which so lifts them in the region of thought as that here given, "The Word of God." For is it not a name which they share with the only Begotten Son Himself? There is a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews where the writer speaks of the Word of God as sharp and terrible, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, and being a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," in which it is impossible to decide indisputably whether he is referring to the Personal Word or to the written Word; and you will find high authority for either interpretation. And so, again, in the writings of S. John, the same title is borne by our Lord; He is the "Word," Who was in the beginning with God, and was God. He is the Word of Life Which was seen and handled, and in the Apocalyptic vision He is seen riding forth conquering and to conquer,

and bearing on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, "The Word of God."

And as there is this association of the written Word, and the Incarnate Word in the Name borne by each, so in the history of heresy and error has the truth concerning each been assailed in much the same way. If, on the one hand, it was whispered in earliest times that our Lord's human body was a mere semblance of a body, having no real substance or capacity of suffering, so have there been exaggerated statements of the supervision of the Holy Ghost in the composition of Scripture, leaving no place for the action of the human mind of the inspired writer. If, on the other hand, Arius would give all honour to Jesus Christ, save the acknowledgment of His proper Divinity, so are there not wanting numbers amongst ourselves who will concede to the Bible all respect—as an exposition of morals, loftier than any other, as an unveiling of Deity more sublime than any other, as a mine of devout and holy aspirations more universally true than any other—only just withholding from it the confession of a Divine authorship.

If Nestorius so separated between the Divine and human nature in Christ as to eat away the doctrine that God and Man are one Christ, so are there those

who would affirm that by his verifying faculty a man may separate between the human and Divine in the Bible, the two lying wholly independent and apart, thus vitiating the power of the Book as a guide to truth, because of its being dependent upon the human judgment to which region, the Divine or human, any statement of doctrine should be relegated. And, once more, if Eutyches so interfused the Divine and human natures in our Lord as to destroy alike the perfection of the Godhead and the Manhood in them, so may you hear the Bible spoken of as being only like some grand epic, the outcome of human diligence and mental gifts—gifts no doubt in their origin Divine, but not so maintaining their propriety as that the Book should have supreme authority over the consciences of men.

Now, it is not as a mere curious speculation that I put these thoughts before you. What I want you to see is, how great and mysterious, how awful and august, is this Word of God, which you are taught to dispense, identified with the Eternal Son in its name, its ineffable union of the human and Divine in it offering the same difficulties and to be handled with the same reverence as the Incarnate Word Himself. How shall you touch this

Ark? How bring out its secret things? Surely, you see at once that a Book like this is not to be appealed unto and argued from with a glib tongue and a flippant confidence; that its pregnant sayings are not to be used to silence an opponent, or to uphold a favourite system, without deep and careful thought whether what at first glance they seem to mean is what they really do mean, without endeavouring to learn what the Saints of God, the highest sanctified intellects of former days, have read in the mystic oracles. Surely, not confidence, but fear, not sharp incisive theory about Inspiration, not a facility in throwing off unthought-out exposition, but a contentment to speak cautiously, to know little and leave much unknown, is the fitting attitude of mind in which to approach this mountain of fire and of cloud.

Let me try and give you one or two rules as to dispensing faithfully this Word of God.

1. He who dispenses must first have received. If in your Ministry you would divide God's Word rightly, you must first have accepted it with your whole heart as His Word. It is not necessary—I have said this already—that you should have at hand a theory of Inspiration. It is necessary that you should have taken it to your own souls

as being the direct Revelation of God to man. Hence the question I have to ask to-morrow, whether you believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. If, though there be many things which perplex, you do not with your whole heart accept the written Bible as God's law of life and death to men, your preaching must be but a stammering utterance; your speaking to the sick and sorrowful, the doubting troubled soul, only vague and unsatisfying; you cannot be a faithful dispenser of the Word of God.

2. Next, let me advise you not to build overmuch on single texts, but upon the general bearing of whole passages. There is often a great fallacy in the application of short, epigrammatic sentences of Scripture. They have fastened themselves in our memories from their brevity and pointedness, but they not uncommonly mean something very different when read in connection with the context. So used they may throw back an adversary for a moment, or in preaching they may display your ingenuity, but you may all the while be bolstering up an error, or preparing the way for after doubt, when the hollowness of your exposition is apparent; you will not have dispensed faithfully God's Word.

3. Akin to the above fault is that of not carefully noting whether the Scripture in question is of immediate or of lasting application. Christ spoke for all time. Ages unborn were within His ken, as the crowd gathered round and He opened His mouth and taught them. On the contrary, many things which He said, and Apostles after Him, had direct and absolute reference only to that particular age, and can be applied only in a secondary and modified way to ourselves. Every expression, therefore, may not be crystallized into a permanent dogma.

4. There is one suggestion more. It is not well, in my judgment, to attempt to unfold in every sermon the whole plan of salvation. If you are a missionary, speaking for the first time to those who know not Christ, as S. Paul upon Mars' Hill, then this salvation is the message which you have to deliver; but in preaching to a congregation of the baptized, the repetition of the same theme not only weakens its own power, but the attention is distracted from the special lesson which you desire to inculcate. There should be, as far as possible, in every sermon a single thought, illustrated, diverged from and returned unto again and again, but running like a golden thread through the

varied woof, so that when it is done a single sentence may tell what the sermon has been about.

II. But I must turn to the second portion of the charge to be given to you. "Be thou a faithful dispenser of His holy Sacraments." Now, it may seem that I need not delay long upon your dispensing the Sacrament of Baptism; and yet it is hardly so. For, from the number of letters which I receive from different Clergymen acquainting me (as I ask you to do) of their proposing to baptize adults, it is obvious that Infant Baptism is often so much neglected that the Parish Priest has to prepare persons of riper years for the initiatory Sacrament; and hence it is essential that you should thoroughly understand that doctrine of Baptism which an inspired writer has placed amongst the principles of the doctrine of Christ. Moreover, it is most important that you should see clearly the relation of Sacramental rites to each other—how in Baptism the Holy Ghost is given as a beginning of spiritual life, how in Confirmation that gift is strengthened and enlarged, how in Holy Communion that spiritual life is continually fed and sustained by the Bread which cometh down from Heaven. Let me urge you to have constantly before you, as Dispensers of Christ's Sacraments, that passage

in the fifth Book of Hooker which states so clearly and pointedly the mutual relation of these ordinances.

I am not sure that there has not of late been some neglect of the doctrine of Baptism in our teaching. Forty years ago Baptism was the great subject of controversy amongst us. Controversy about the other Sacrament, the Holy Communion, has of late more absorbed our minds; and yet, believe me, it is a baseless Ministry which does not make the dispensing the Sacrament of Baptism the foundation of its teaching and pastoral care, which does not regard the act of baptizing as one of the highest privileges of our office, which does not recognize in the "one Baptism" the fundamental link between Minister and people, which does not, in catechizing and in the Sunday School, recur continually to the New Birth of Water and the Spirit as the first stone of the edifice of Christian training—the root, in the economy of grace, of growth in holiness.

You will have noted a distinction between the Minister of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper. Baptism is permitted to Deacons. It is the crown of their office. Such, from the days of Philip the Deacon, has been the practice of the Church; and in cases of emergency laymen have

also been allowed to baptize. The ministration of the Holy Communion is rigidly restricted to the Priesthood, and this it is necessary for me to say both in regard to Celebration in Church and also in a private house to the sick. The law both of the Church and of the land equally limit to those who are in Priests' Orders alike the public and private administration of Holy Communion. Nor is the cause of the difference between the rule for the dispensing of the two Sacraments far to seek. In the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there has always been held by the Church to be a sacrificial character. It can be no repetition of the first Sacrifice upon Mount Calvary, but it is a continual Memorial of that Sacrifice, and so was properly termed "Sacrificium Commemorativum." Strictly speaking, there has been but One real and true Sacrifice possessing atoning or expiatory power, viz. the Death of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the altar of the Cross. The whole series of Jewish sacrifices were but shadows cast before of that One Sacrifice. The whole series of Eucharistic Celebrations are the shadows of the same following after. In that Bread and Cup we show forth the Lord's Death and plead it for our pardon. It is the throwing into act the solemn adjuration,

"By Thy Cross and Passion, good Lord deliver us." So Bishop Cosin has left us this Prayer, "O Lord, heavenly Father, regard, we beseech Thee, the devotion of Thy humble servants, who do now celebrate the Memorial which Thy Son hath commanded to be made in remembrance of His most blessed Passion and Sacrifice, that by the merits and powers thereof now represented before Thy Divine Majesty we and all Thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins." The Holy Communion, possessing thus a sacrificial character, has been, in strict analogy with the type of the Mosaic Law, exclusively restricted to the Christian Priesthood; the Sacrament of Baptism, partaking of no such sacrificial character, has been from the beginning administered by the Diaconate.

Again, if you study carefully the second part of the Catechism, you will find a great difference in the very nature of the two Sacraments as there defined. Thus, in the Sacrament of Baptism, we are told that the outward visible part or sign is water. It is then asked, "What is the inward and spiritual grace?" the reply being, "A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness." When we proceed to the Lord's Supper, the question recurs, "What is the outward part or sign?" the answer being

"Bread and Wine." But there follows a question which has no parallel amongst those on Holy Baptism, viz. "What is the inward part or thing signified?" the reply being, "The Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful." A third question succeeds as to the benefits of reception. Thus two questions exhaust the mystery of the Baptismal Sacrament, whilst three propositions are involved in the doctrine of the Holy Communion. Now, it is the Prayer of Consecration by which the elements of Bread and Wine are set apart to be thus the outward sign of an inward part. So S. Paul declares, "The Cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [or communication] of the Blood of Christ?" The Bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ? There is no similar setting apart of the water in the Font; there are no manual acts to be performed analogous to breaking the Bread and laying the hand in blessing upon the Bread and Cup. On the contrary, the opening Prayer in the Office for the Baptism of adults runs: "Almighty and Everlasting God, Who . . . by the Baptism of Thy well-beloved Son in the river Jordan, didst sanctify the element of water to the mystical washing away of sins." The whole element of water having been

once for all hallowed for this purpose, there needs no further benediction of any separate portion of it. And hence, again, the ministration of the Priesthood is by the Church demanded for the one Sacrament, and not for the other.

In the administration of the Holy Communion you will find that you touch the highest part of your office. It is that which is reserved to you who are ordained Priests, and to you alone. I do not mean to draw any comparison between the value of preaching and the value of Sacraments. Both are equally Divine Ordinances. But it is in the ministration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper that you are called to perform that part of your Priestly functions with which no stranger may intermeddle, that in which you most closely imitate the action of our ascended Lord behind the veil, that, too, in which your own personality is more completely lost than in teaching and exhorting.

When you preach, how much depends upon yourself, your own warmth and love, your own learning and mastery of the subject, your own capacity, conveying your own thoughts to other minds! Quite true is it that in preaching it must be the Spirit of God Which carries home the arrow which you discharge from the bow. Nevertheless,

there can be no dispute that the personal gifts of the preacher have much to do with the power of his preaching.

In the administration of Sacraments, on the contrary, man is nowhere, God is all; your unworthiness, your carelessness, your unbelief, cannot mar the effect of the Divine Ordinance. Your own soul may have been cleaving to the dust during the whole of the Sacramental rite; none the less the Bread which you have broken, and the Cup which you have blessed, will strengthen and refresh the souls of the worthy receivers. Here, then, the human is at a minimum, the Divine is at the strongest; and yet because this is so you will not feel that you may in the slightest degree relax your diligence and care at this Ministration. As to yourselves, you will find when you have to celebrate the Holy Communion how deep, how high, how passing wonder is that which you are empowered to do, how especially incumbent on you it therefore is, at that highest point of service, to have the full command of your thoughts, to be able to concentrate them upon what you are about. Then, too, you will feel is the time of intercession for all in your charge, more particularly for any to whom you are specially ministering—to bear their names before the Lord,

remembering their individual needs. "For this cause," said Bishop Andrewes, the "Priests are called the Lord's 'remembrancers,' because they put God in mind of His people, desiring Him continually to keep and bless them with things needful." And if continually, then especially at that hour when they are making before the Lord the great Memorial of His Sacrifice for Whose sake alone is any prayer heard on high.

Again, you will look at it as a chief part of your Ministry to make your people communicants. You will point out to them the difference between true and false reverence for the Holy Communion. I believe that there yet dwells in the minds of our English poor a profounder reverence for this Sacrament than is to be discovered in any other lands. They have, even the careless amongst them, a deep conviction that those who "take the Sacrament" are bound to a more earnest religious life than those who receive it not. This very reluctance to communicate has often its root in the feeling that they shall be unable to live as they think a communicant should live. You will accept this element of truth in their mind, and show them how Communion is a means to an end; that it is for the tempted, the tried, the burdened, to help them to fulfil their

part, and to bear their burden; that it is idle to wait until they are secure against falling, when the very aim of the Sacrament is to aid them against falling, and to help them to rise up again after a fall.

You will endeavour, also, to exercise a wholesome discipline over your communicants. A Clergyman may, especially in quiet country parishes, where he knows everybody, do a great deal in this way. He may advise communicants who have fallen into some grievous sin to abstain from communicating for a while—and his advice will almost always be taken,—and by fixing the time for their next Communion, he may hold them in hand, so as not, by repelling, to lose them altogether. We scarcely realize the spiritual authority which the wise and loving Parish Priest may still exercise in this way; and if you get into the habit of exercising it, you may take heart in bringing young persons, after Confirmation, to the Lord's Table. Many Clergy shrink from taking rough boys and girls into the communicant ranks from a dread of some grievous scandal. My brethren, "it needs must be that offences come." Our part is not in fear to keep the young away from the Table of the Lord, but to bring them ere they fall, watching over them after Communion, and gathering them into classes, that

by the force of companionship they may be held together in good, and, if need be, suspending them for a time from this highest privilege; it is our part to prevent our people from growing up in the notion that the Blessed Sacrament is only for the highly educated, or the sick, or the aged, and not equally for those who are in the forefront of the battle of life, with the full pressure of youthful lusts upon them.

"Be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God and of His Holy Sacraments." I have spoken to you of either part of this high charge. Remember one thing more—it is a twofold charge, and you may not separate what God has joined together. I know not which is worst, to exalt Sacraments at the cost of disparaging Preaching, or to be so absorbed in the idea of Preaching the Word as to treat Sacraments as of small moment. You are to dispense both the Word and the Sacraments with equal pains, equal reverence, equal zeal. The Ministry which undervalues either will surely prove a barren, unprofitable Ministry. It is on the union of the two, in the loving dispensing of them both, that you will build up in your Parishes, not the influence of an individual, not a religionism as fleeting as your own stay, but a sober, solid Church

life which shall last long after your voice has ceased to speak to your listeners, and which shall be a holy bequest to the generation that follows.

God grant it may be your blessed privilege so to dispense His Word and Sacraments, each in the lot of your inheritance.

The Presentation of Candidates.

"*The Archdeacon or his Deputy.*

"Reverend Father in God, I present unto you these persons present, to be admitted Deacons—or to the Order of Priesthood.

"*The Bishop.*

"Take heed that the persons, whom ye present unto us, be apt and meet, for their learning and godly conversation, to exercise their Ministry duly, to the honour of God, and the edifying of His Church.

"*The Archdeacon shall answer,*

"I have inquired of them, and also examined them, and think them so to be."

VII.

The Presentation of Candidates.

I am desirous, in what I have to say to-night, to draw to a head the devotions and instructions of the last few days which we have been spending together, and in order to this I propose to speak to you upon the opening of the Service of Ordination, in which we are all in divers ways to be engaged, God willing, to-morrow morning. If you consider carefully the structure of the Ordination Service, you will find three distinct and salient parts. Out of the accumulated Litanies and Exhortations and Prayers, three acts stand out in marked prominence.

First, the Presentation of the Candidates; secondly, the Examination of the Candidates; thirdly, the Ordination itself.

Around these three points the entire Office circles. The overt Act of Ordaining by the Imposition of hands is, of course, that to which all else is subservient—which is, in fact, the only essential portion of the Rite; but the Presentation and public

Interrogation of the Candidates are important and venerable adjuncts, and will furnish us with many weighty and solemn lessons.

To-night I shall confine your attention to the first of these leading features in the Rite of Ordination, with which the Office opens.

The primary Rubric of the Order for Ordaining both Priests and Deacons runs thus: "First, the Archdeacon, or his Deputy, shall present unto the Bishop such as desire to be ordained, saying these words, Reverend Father in God, I present unto you these Persons, to be admitted Deacons—or Priests." The presenter is then charged to present only those who are duly qualified by learning and holiness of life; and he, in reply, certifies that those whom he presents are so qualified. The congregation are thereupon invited to object to any who may, in spite of this testimony, have ought capable of being alleged against them. Now, this Presentation of the Candidates, although, as I have said, not of the essence of Ordination, is a Ceremony of great antiquity, and of very wide prevalence. The most ancient form of Ordination which has descended to us is in Greek, and bears the name of S. Clement. It is pronounced by Morinus to represent, beyond all doubt, the ceremonial of the second and third

centuries—to represent, in short, the ritual of the Church of the Catacombs. It is but a fragment, and concerns the Ordination of a Bishop; but in this primitive Office we discern the traces of a Presentation of the Candidate, an appeal to the congregation by the presiding Bishop, whether they can testify to his worthiness; and only upon a satisfactory answer being made does the Ordination proceed. Coming down to later Ecclesiastical History, we have four manuscript Services of the eighth, ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth centuries. And here the Presentation of the Candidates by the Archdeacon is distinctly prescribed, each Candidate being furnished also with a written certificate (χαρτοφύλαξ). In the Greek Church, as in our own, the Office opens with the Presentation to the Bishop of the Candidates for Deacon's Orders by the Archdeacon, of the Candidates for Priest's Orders by two Priests. The words of Presentation of the Deacons run thus: "The godly Deacon N., our brother, is presented for admission, by the laying on of hands, to the Priesthood." The Bishop replies, "The grace of God, which heals our infirmities, and fills up what is wanting in us, advances the godly Deacon N. to the Priesthood. Let us pray for him, that the grace of the Holy Spirit may come upon him."

The time of Presentation in the Pre-Reformation Church of England is almost identical with our own, the words of presentment being simply translated from the Latin Offices. Here, then, you have the history in brief of the custom of presenting the Candidates. The custom can hardly be traceable to such remote antiquity and through all the changes of eighteen hundred years have been scrupulously preserved, unless there be some important principles involved. Let me point out what these principles are, so that this part of the Ceremonial to-morrow may be to you not a dead form, but a living reality, a thing of reverence and prayer.

I. Observe how the whole Church is associated in the work of Ordination of every single man. It is, of course, true in one sense that the Bishop is the source of Orders. So the council of Sardica (343) repudiated as invalid the Ordination of certain, who had been ordained by Presbyters only; and Bishop Pearson thus sums up the whole question of fact: "And our Church has conclusively adopted the principle as her own, in the Preface to the Ordinal, in which is asserted, (1) the perpetuity of the three Orders of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, in the Church from the Apostles' times; (2) the intention to continue their orders

still; (3) the making Episcopal Ordination an essential condition of ministering within our pale."

The Bishop, therefore, is the "source of Orders," after the saying of S. Augustine.

But, according to the constitution of the Church Catholic, the Bishop cannot arbitrarily ordain whom he will. The whole congregation, or Body of Christ, must be consentient to his act, or rather must set him in motion. A Bishop ordains those whom the Church offers to him.

We may, perhaps, find the earliest trace of this in the appointment of the seven Deacons in the Book of the Acts. The Apostles charge the body of believers thus: "Brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." The saying, we read, pleased the multitude, and they chose Stephen with others, "whom" (it is written) "they set before the apostles" (what is this but the presenting the candidates for the Office?), "and when the Apostles had prayed, they laid their hands upon them" (what is this but the Apostolic Ordination of the chosen seven?). And it is, I think, very important that this principle should be thoroughly understood. The intellectual and spiritual probation which you have undergone,

not by me but by certain Presbyters, is a fulfilment of the Apostolic charge to look out fitting men. These Presbyters are not to be regarded as my deputies, but as the representatives of the Church. If they decline to present any, my hands are stayed from ordaining such; I cannot ordain unless they present. I cannot force their free option, whether they will present or not. If, on the other hand, they report you worthy, I ask no more. Thus, even in the matter of Ordination, the Bishop is not an autocrat. In the exercise of his highest and most exclusive function—the Imposition of hands—he is controlled by the Council of the Presbyters.

Those of you, my brethren, who are to-morrow to be admitted into the Ministry, are to regard yourselves as co-opted into that high dignity by those who already possess it; it is a sacred company into which you are chosen, and it is mine to give effect to the choice which has been made of you by those who were Ministers of it before you. And this co-option is announced to the laity in the congregation, and opportunity for dissent afforded. Anciently the people signified their approval by responding, of each candidate, Ἄξιος—"He is worthy." With us, abstinence from objection is construed as consent. But the general law is clear. You are

presented to me for the Laying on of hands, as the chosen and approved of the whole Body of Christ, Priests and Laymen, with whom and to whom you are to minister to your life's end.

My brethren, does not that Presentment which is to be gone through to-morrow assume a very solemn character when thus regarded? The Church of God will then offer you, your life, your energies, your affections, your knowledge and acquirements, your gifts and talents, as an oblation to the Risen and Ascended Christ, High Priest and King. The Church may be mistaken in you, for the "discerning of spirits" is a grace no longer vouchsafed unto her; but she has laboured by her deputed Ministers to ascertain your fitness for this Ministry, your desire unto it, your prospects of fulfilling it. And in presenting you to me, the Church lays you, as it were, each one a willing sacrifice upon the altar, having done what she can to satisfy herself that her offering is without blemish and without spot. Look, I pray you, into your hearts, which the Church seeth not, to-night in the silence of your chamber, to-morrow as you stand in your presentation ranks, and see whether there be any such thing, any allowed selfishness, any conscious falseness in you, which under the

fair seeming will render this offering of yourselves an abomination in His sight, and pray Him to heal what is amiss in you, and to supply what is wanting.

II. Next, let me point out the substance of the testimony borne unto you. "Take heed," is the caution, "that the persons, whom ye present unto us, be apt and meet for their learning and godly conversation, to exercise their Ministry duly, to the honour of God, and the edifying of His Church." Learning and a godly life—these are the two qualifications for your Office. Let me touch upon both. Learning is, of course, Theological learning, and Theological learning involves two main subjects. It involves a knowledge of History. The Church of England is essentially an Historic Church. The sects have no history. The surface of Nonconformity, like that of the ocean, is ever in a state of restless undulation. But more, perhaps, than any other Branch of the Church Catholic, the Anglican Church is an Historic Church. The Roman Church, by the acknowledgment of a living infallible authority, able to develop doctrine to such an extent that the development becomes an addition, has in a large degree cut herself loose from History. She could not go back to the Ante-Nicene Church for her doctrines and usages. And the great Eastern

Church, by its very unchangeableness even in minutest points, while it has given the rolling centuries little influence over her, has so far annihilated History. But you, my brethren, are to become Ministers of a Church which has an ever-varying yet ever the same aspect, which has grown with the growth of the nation, become modified with the accumulation of the years, and yet, like the individual man, through all the changes of boyhood, maturity, age, has preserved its identity indisputable; and so, therefore, if you would really know what you are, where you stand in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, you must make yourselves familiar with the records of the Body at whose Altars you serve. You cannot contend with the Romanist or the Nonconformist without having clear and distinct before your mind the facts that, even in its origin, the English Church is no mere offshoot of the Latin Patriarchate, that there was a Church in these islands before the advent of S. Augustine, and, that the threads of the old British Church are entwined with those of Saxon Christianity in our present organization. You cannot maintain your true position unless, again, you have ready to hand, at a moment's need, the facts of the sixteenth century, which shatter into fragments the theory

that the English Church is the creation of the State three centuries ago, established (the word does not occur prior to the coronation of Charles I.) and endowed by the Legislature; or that other series of facts which demonstrate against Roman controversialists, that the continuity of the Anglican body was never broken, that during the whole of the Reformation convulsion the same Priests ministered, the same succession of Holy Orders was maintained. I would most earnestly press upon you not to regard all this, because it is the subject-matter of your Examination, as having no practical value, as something which you may forget when your Examinations are over. These facts are the very charter of your Ministry; they can never safely be let sleep, or suffered to become vague and mixed in your memory. The Clergyman who goes to his parish having never mastered, or having forgotten, all this varied chronicle,—how poor and thin must his teaching be, how isolated and unstable his professional position! The Prayer-book itself —how utterly different a volume does it become, according as you see its pages flooded with the light of the struggles and warfare of the past, or regard it as a mere depository of Collects, or extracts from the Bible, dependent only for their

interest and value upon what they are in themselves! In the one view it is a common school manual, in the other it is hallowed by the shadows of the great conflict between truth and error, light and darkness, falling upon it—by the vigils of Saints, and the warfare of the mighty ones of the kingdom centering in it. Again, the learning by which you are fitted for your work must involve such a knowledge of doctrine as will enable you to state it and to teach it with exactness and definiteness.

Brethren, there is no point in regard to which our ministrations, I believe, suffer more than from the lack of accuracy of doctrinal statement. Our instructions about Baptism and Confirmation lose force simply because we do not state clearly and definitely the nature of these Ordinances; and is it not too often the case that we preach and teach vaguely because, in our ignorance, we dare not be precise, and endeavour to avoid being proved wrong by virtually teaching nothing?

Again, we put stumbling blocks in the way and call forth objections to what we teach from not perceiving the due relations of one doctrine to another.

I will give an example.

There are amongst us two great schools of Theology. The one is often termed the Sacramental school. It dwells largely and properly upon the Sacraments as being channels of Divine grace. The other sets forth more prominently and continuously the doctrine of the Atonement, and of the spiritual intercommunion of the individual soul with the Divine Saviour. The one dwells much on the privileges of the Body of Christ, the blessings and responsibilities of Church membership; the other upon individual responsibility and love. Now, brethren, what is required of us as Ministers of God's Holy Word, and what "godly learning" will alone qualify us to do, is ourselves to see clearly, and to be able to put clearly before others, that these two lines of doctrinal preaching are not in collision.

The Sacramental system is not inconsistent with the entire resting of the individual soul upon the Personal Christ, His finished Work, His great Salvation. In teaching the one, we must not be afraid of the other. But it is plain that to insist upon this, and to bring out this, demands in the preacher a sharp and precise knowledge of the relations of one doctrine to another.

So with other truths. The doctrine of Baptismal

Regeneration leaves abundant scope for the doctrine of conversion. The doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice does not, in the slightest degree, infringe upon the doctrine of "One Sacrifice offered once for all upon the cross." The existence of a Christian Priesthood is not only by no means incompatible with, but is even implied in the title of High Priest as borne by our Blessed Lord, the very designation High Priest involving the notion of inferior Priests.

It is the accurate perception of the correlation of doctrines which, I am persuaded, is above all things necessary for us in these days, when equal earnestness, equal love of our Lord Jesus Christ, equal zeal for saving souls, is found ranging itself under different banners, adopting different battle cries, unconscious all the while that if they could but see it they are in very deed one.

And yet, my brethren, learning is not all that you require, not all upon the warranty of which the Church presents you for admission into her Ministry. "Godly conversation"—this is the other qualification; a pure, a holy, a devout life. Such should have been your life in the past, such must it be in the future, if you are to build up the Church of God and shepherd well the souls under your charge. I am not speaking now of "godliness"

for your own sakes, but as it bears upon your professional work. "They brought forth the sick into the streets, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them." Even so is there ever resting upon a Parish the shadow of the personal life and character of its spiritual guide. Over those, whom he knows not, the shadow falls. Words spoken travel whither he cannot trace them. Acts of slight irreverence wound tender souls, of whose hurt he will never hear.

The being seen in "a false position," as it is called, partaking of unseemly amusements, associated with unworthy companions, will drive back souls just beginning to be drawn heavenwards. Let me quote the words of one now passed away. "A vast amount of influence," said Bishop Wilberforce, "for good or for evil, is continually acting on our people in the character which we exhibit to them. There is a natural tendency to the reproduction of the Pastor's character among his flock. In Church, in our families, in the field, in our recreations, their eyes are on us; and if devotion, and purity, and self-restraint, and high aims, and humility, and a mortified spirit are under the working of God's grace, caught (though it be slowly) by one and another from the living pattern of their Pastor's

conduct, the opposites of all these are most readily and surely copied out in those whose natural corruption makes any excuse for a low standard in the religious life far too certainly welcome." And, again, we want for the Ministry of our parishes earnest spiritual men, men of prayer, men of faith, men of God, men who can speak "that they do know and testify that they have seen," men who can witness to others of the salvation they have found for themselves, who can speak of Christ as having known Christ, who can declare the Spirit's power because He has wrought upon themselves. A holy devout life is needful in ourselves, that in all our treatment of others we may be real, that we may be clear of the awful guilt of using the Name of Christ and the Mysteries of His Gospel as mere matters of professional routine.

"Take heed that those, whom ye present unto us, be apt and meet, for their learning and godly conversation." In the ancient Offices there was a third requirement. The Latin words ran, "apt and meet, naturâ, moribus, scientiâ." By "naturâ," I suppose, was meant the natural temperament and disposition. And in your self-examination, I would not have you altogether omit the consideration whether your natural character (which in its measure will always

exist, even under the influence of God's grace) be such as to fit you for this work—whether you are by nature fitted for a life of study and thought; a life made up of the same round of daily duties; a life demanding a warm sympathy with others, an untiring patience amidst many hindrances, a broad comprehensiveness of heart which can embrace many diverse characters in its affection; a life demanding singular self-control to forego many things which are lawful but not expedient for you. What of this you have by nature, set down for so much gain. What you have not, seek by God's grace to win. For, above all, let this be your resolve, never to bring down your estimate of the ministerial life and character to the level of your own acquirements and powers, but ever, ever, with God's help, to strive to lift up your own dull, cold nature to the very loftiest standard; so, it may be, with a little you shall serve much, so with one talent give the Master when He appeareth a good account, so hand on amid many personal defects a high tradition to those that come after.

The Ordination Vows of a Pattern Life, a Life of Belief, and a Life Ministerial.

"Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves according to the Doctrine of Christ; and to make yourselves, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ?

"*Answer*—I will apply myself thereto, the Lord being my helper."

OFFICE FOR THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS.

"Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament?

"*Answer*—I do believe them."

OFFICE FOR THE ORDERING OF DEACONS.

"Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ, &c.?

"*Answer*—I will so do, by the help of the Lord."

OFFICE FOR THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS.

VIII.

The Ordination Vows of a Pattern Life, a Life of Belief, and a Life Ministerial.

Those of you who were admitted to the Order of Deacons last year may remember that in my Charge I pointed out to you that three great salient actions stand forth in distinct prominence from the Ordination Service: (1) the Presentation of the Candidates; (2) the Public Examination of the Candidates; (3) the Imposition of hands. And I spoke to you of the doctrines and practical lessons taught by the opening ceremony of to-morrow's solemnity, viz. the Presentation of the Candidates.

This evening I propose to dwell upon the second dominant part of the Ritual—the public questioning of the Candidates.

The Rubric runs thus: "Then shall the Bishop examine every one of them that are to be Ordered, in the presence of the people, after this manner following." And the object of such Examination is declared in the following sentence, which introduces

the corresponding Examination of the Candidates for Priesthood: "That this Congregation of Christ here assembled may understand your minds in these things, and that this your promise may the more move you to do your duties."

It is to be noted, historically, that in the Ancient Ordinals there was no public Examination of the faith and principles of those to be ordained Deacon or Priest. But it was the use from earliest times in the Consecration of Bishops; and it is by many expositors considered to have grown out of an allusion in S. Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy: "But thou, O man of God, fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." The profession here made is supposed to be a declaration of the motives and purposes upon which Timothy was appointed to his office.

The reason why no public questioning of Candidates for the Priesthood and Diaconate is found in the Ancient Ordinals, probably is that they had been previously examined in private. "Nullus ordinetur nisi examinatio precedat," is an old law, and by a special local Council held in A.D. 900, three days were prescribed for it. No such private Examination was ordered in the case of persons to be made

Bishops, but it was enjoined that they should give a public profession of their faith before the whole congregation.

The Anglican Reformers found the present series of Questions and Answers, as proposed to Bishops, in the Sarum Pontifical, and they resolved to introduce it, with certain necessary modifications, into the Offices for the Ordination of Priests and Deacons. Why they did this, unless for the sake of symmetry, is not so evident. But it may have arisen from a deeper cause. We can, I think, trace in the English Ordinal very plain marks of a desire to raise the sense of responsibility in those admitted to Holy Orders. This had, there is reason to believe, fallen very low in the latter years of the Unreformed Church. Whilst the Divinely lodged prerogatives of the Priestly Office were steadfastly maintained in theory, there had grown up much laxity in regard to the characters of those ordained.

The multiplication of private Masses for the dead had led to the multiplication of Priests, who lived simply by reciting those Masses for certain fees, without fulfilling any pastoral work.

The ancient Ordination lists of this Diocese, by the very number of those ordained, in proportion to the number of benefices, indicate a lavish dispensing

of Holy Orders; and we are all familiar with the system of the Middle Ages, by which large numbers of Ecclesiastics were absorbed into the service of the State, and maintained out of the endowments of the Church without ever having cure of souls or following the rules of priestly life.

It is, therefore, not I think unlikely that by the introducing into the Ordination of Deacons and Priests a solemn questioning as to their faith and purpose in seeking Orders, their resolution to visit the sick and whole, to make themselves and their households examples to the neighbourhood, our Reformers may have intended to lift the whole idea, not of the prerogatives of the Priesthood, but of the responsibility incurred by entering upon it. The Monastic Orders, moreover, had disappeared, and with the disappearance the very ideal of a life abstracted from the world was necessarily shaken in the popular mind. If the Clergy of the future (henceforth all secular Clergy) were to maintain their position as spiritual fathers and guides of the people, it may well have seemed important to throw around the admission to the Diaconate and Priesthood a deeper personal responsibility, to kindle a more fervent sense of the great danger of taking up those Orders rashly, the risk of being carried away by that stream of utter world-

liness which, amid the break-up of the old Church restraints, might well be apprehended.

If there be soundness in this view, then you will observe how around these questions and answers in which you are to bear a part to-morrow, as I have shown to be the case with other portions of the Ordinal, gather the shadows of old fightings of the Church in dangerous days—fightings for more faith and zeal in her own Ministers, fightings to preserve, amid the shock of falling systems and the shadows of an unknown future, a Priesthood not only having a true unbroken descent from the Apostles, but filled with an Apostolic Spirit, and prepared to give themselves wholly to the office whereunto they should be called.

For what, religiously considered, is the real character of the Examination to which before God and His Church you are to be subjected to-morrow?

The first question differs from those that follow. It inquires what is the motive-cause which brings you to seek Holy Orders: "Do you trust, or think, that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this Office and Ministration?"

It is a spiritual conviction about which you are here asked to satisfy yourself and others. But how? How shall you be assured that to you has indeed

come the Divine Voice, not appreciable by the outward ear, but identified by the soul, calling you amid the many paths of human life and occupation to set your foot upon this? Whilst your friends and acquaintances are throwing themselves into scientific inquiry, or commercial enterprise, or political struggles, at the beck of friends or the guidance of circumstances, has thy soul, O man, in very deed heard the blessed whisper—"What is that to thee? follow thou Me"? It is obvious that the answer is not easy.

How will you probe yourselves, and know with any surety what, in this high matter, is the will of Christ concerning you?

The questions which follow are designed to help you to the answer. Those questions, taken as a whole, delineate a character; they combine to form the portrait of a life—the life of an English Clergyman. Can you with your whole heart pledge yourself cheerfully and willingly to the life there indicated? Is there no point on which you hesitate, either as to what you profess to believe or intend to practice? Then may you with a good conscience declare that you believe yourself called to this office. If, on the other hand, you do not believe with a whole faith the message of the Gospel which you undertake

to deliver; if your heart goes not along with the system of the Church whose Commission you seek; if you see no occasion for such strictness of life, such unreserved devotion to the work of the Ministry as the answers to the several questions taken together imply; if you feel that yours is a lower standard of Ministerial character, or a lower idea of Ecclesiastical discipline;—then you cannot rightly avow yourself called by the Spirit to a vocation of which these are the constituent elements. I would thus have you turn the light of the after-questionings upon the obscurity of the first. The verity of your Call depends upon the fact whether or not you can be sincere in your reply to what follows. I would have you, even this night, look through carefully each of those interrogatories, pausing upon each, weighing well to what each pledges you, and then go back and, by the answer of your conscience, gather up the conclusion whether to such a life you are called.

For, indeed, these answers are vows; made vocally to me, they are the soul's promises to God. We speak of Ordination vows. These are the vows; they are the terms of your service, the conditions under which you receive the Holy Ghost for your office; vows uttered before the elect angels,

vows made unto the Most High, vows by which, in the Day of Judgment, as they have been kept or broken, you must stand or fall.

I will notice three leading characteristics of the life whose constituent elements these answers exhibit.

I. First, the life to which you pledge yourself is a "Pattern life." You are not asked whether you will endeavour by God's grace to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world, to be true and just in your dealings, kindly and benevolent to those in poverty and affliction; the vow of your Baptism binds you to this; all men, in any degree fulfilling their Christian vocation, profess to aim at this. But the Ordination vow is not identical with the Baptismal. In those solemn words to the Levitical priesthood, "Be ye holy, ye that bear the vessels of the Sanctuary," something more was meant than that they should live as every true Israelite was called upon to live. And the rubrics for the inauguration of Aaron and his sons point in the same direction: "And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water." That washing with water, preceding the clothing them with the special garments of their Ministry, was to indicate that

their life was to be one of special purity, special devotion, special freedom from every appearance of evil; and so now yours is to be, not the life of which none take note, whose shadow falls on none, the consequences of whose actions are restricted to the man's self alone; yours is to be the life which is to be seen and read of all men. In the smallest country parishes there will be busy eyes watching your daily course, glib tongues forward to comment upon your manner in the street, in company, under provocation, in trouble. You promise so to fashion the lives of yourselves and families as to be wholesome examples to the flock. This having to be an "example" is to be the note of your life.

And, my brethren, need I stay to point out how full of spiritual snares such a life must always be? To grow self-conscious and self-conceited, to play a part before men, to carry an appearance of more devotion, more earnestness, more love of God than you really possess,—these are the perils which haunt the path of one who is set for an example to the people, and these perils, nevertheless, you must incur. From its very nature the Ministerial life must be this "Pattern life." Would you then rise superior to its dangers, it must be your daily

prayer, your unwearied watch, to bring, by God's grace, your true self up to the outward seeming. You cannot lower that "outward form of godliness" without vitiating your whole moral influence in your parish. It remains only that you fill out that external form with a true and vigorous life. Here, I believe, is the cause of so many a grievous fall amongst our brethren, so many an imperceptible decline. The part of a Clergyman is at the beginning fairly played; no fault can be found; all that is external bears inspection; but the soul of the Priestly life is not there, and so after a while the shell breaks from the hollowness within. The man grows tired of maintaining unreality, and hence a progressive descent (slow and in small matters at first, but rapidly quickening its pace) from the high tone assumed when he was first ordained until he falls into the ranks, I do not say of immorality, but of mere secular living.

II. The life to which you pledge yourself is a "Life of belief."

"Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament?" This is the question asked of a Deacon. "Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine

contrary to God's Word?" This is the demand which the Church makes of a Priest. Personal orthodoxy and orthodox teaching—this is the sum of the two questions. I use the old-fashioned phrase "orthodoxy," because we know perfectly well its general meaning, and I have no time to trace sharply and minutely its lines. The practical lesson I would enforce is this: as ordained Priests and Deacons, it is not for you to be catching at every novel hypothesis, airing every new speculation, either in preaching or in conversation. If, which God forbid! doubts force themselves upon you, meet them as you best can with the help of prayer to the Holy Ghost; but, at any rate, seek them not. I know not a more pitiable spectacle than that of a man in Holy Orders amusing himself with sceptical writings, talking loosely and broadly, in order to get a character for liberality of opinion, and so by his own wanton action sapping the foundations of his own real belief. Such an one has nothing in common with those profound thinkers across whose minds, whilst engaged in scientific investigations, clouds have stolen in spite of themselves. They who for idle vanity play, as I have said, with their convictions are but the contemptible mimics of greater men. And yet it is no fanciful

danger against which I would warn you; it is one which, I believe, has darkened many a once clear faith, and shattered many a hopeful Ministry. In its later stages you may combat it in vain; in its earlier stages you may guard yourselves even by the remembrance of the belief you avow to-morrow and the resolution not to palter with it.

III. Your life is to be a "Life of ministering" the Doctrine and Sacraments and Discipline of Christ, as this Church hath received the same. You are, that is, to regard your Ministerial life as part of a greater whole, even the "Life Ministerial" of the Church of England. This English Church has a definite system of ministering. You have it in the Prayer-book. She waits upon her children from the cradle to the grave, in her own way, with her Baptism, her Catechism, her Communion, her Visitation of the Sick, her Burial of the Dead. The system is complete, and it is very definite. It is not the system of Rome; it is not the system of Nonconformity. But such as it is it has been deliberately framed and adopted by her Saints and Fathers, it has been controverted and maintained, it has been consecrated by the love of those who have for it suffered bonds and imprisonment. It may sometimes appear to you that, with good

effect, this system may be departed from. Some may desire to import into it, from the right hand or the left, that which it has not. Nevertheless, I would press upon you that the lines of the Church of England system must be loyally kept and worked upon, if you accept her Commission. That system affirms with the Catholic Church the reality, by and through each Sacrament, of its own special gift of grace,—that those Sacraments should not be evaporated into mere acts of man, into outward motives or acted prayers, or become mere superfluous and uncertain signs of that which God's decree has already given. That system involves the belief in an Apostolic Ministry, the careful preservation of it, the consciousness of and thankfulness for the gifts which the possession of that Ministry bestows. Whilst one school amongst us, strong, doubtless, in intellect, would have us forego Church dogma altogether, recognizing no such thing as a formal, extraordinary communication of truth from God to man, holding the Bible itself to be scarcely more than the product of highest human powers, and the Church to be scarcely more than a National Institution for the promotion of moral living; and whilst Nonconformity, enforcing the sense of personal religion and of the personal relations of the

individual soul to its Redeemer, has thrown aside the yoke of Church Order, and reduced to almost nothingness the doctrine of Sacramental grace; you are called upon to work out a system holding a marked and clear position of its own—a system which, in the days of the Reformation, stood out distinct from Rome on the one side and Geneva on the other, which has maintained its special position through three hundred years, and, in spite of charges of narrowness and superstition, holds fast to it still.

Here, then, you have the life to which your Examination to-morrow pledges you—the Pattern Life, the Life of belief, the Life of a Churchman. Go back with the nature of the vow fresh before you and ask yourselves whether to such a Life you are called. It is a vow which, taken rashly, without a full persuasion, without an earnest intention to fulfil it, must end in weariness and vexation of spirit; a vow which, made with a good heart and a single reliance on the power of the Holy Ghost, will work out itself, wherever your lot be cast, in the blessed consciousness of finishing the work given you to do, of fulfilling the Ministry which you have received.

The Act of Ordination

"Take thou Authority to execute the Office of a Deacon in the Church of God committed unto thee; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

OFFICE FOR THE ORDERING OF DEACONS.

"Receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God, and of His holy Sacraments; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

OFFICE FOR THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS.

IX.

The Act of Ordination.

I HAVE said in former years that the Ordination Service of our Church contains three prominent points—headlands, as it were, in the great Rite—soaring up above the chain of Prayers and Exhortations which connect them together, and of which they are themselves a part. The three salient features of the office are—the Presentation of the Candidates: the Examination of the Candidates before the people, as to their belief and mind in seeking the Ministry: and the solemn Act of Ordination by the Imposition of hands, with prayer for the grace of the Holy Ghost. I have already spoken of the two former points; I am now about to speak of the Act of Ordination itself. This is obviously the chief point of all. The Presenting and Examining the Candidates are both subsidiary and introductory to their ultimate setting apart for the work of the Sacred Ministry. This deserves, therefore, our gravest consideration—What is, in its essence, that Act which changes our whole position

in life, up to the moment of submitting to which we are, as other men, free to change with a good conscience from one profession to another; but after which we are fixed by irrefragable vows to one calling, and that calling having reference not so much to the life that now is, but to that which is to come—a calling which, for its implements of labour, its motive power, its force and influence, resorts to the mysteries of eternity, resting itself and its claims to attention upon the secrets of that unseen world which so marvellously surrounds and intersects our own?

We should begin by distinguishing carefully between "Orders" and "Ordination." "Orders" constitute a state or condition of life to which belong special powers. "Ordo," says Morinus, "est status quidam et dignitas hominum, qui, consecratione quâdam pollentes, sacerdotio apud Christianos fungi possunt, aut destinatione et benedictione quâdam consecrati, jus habent ad ministerium aliquod in sacerdotii functione exercendum."

It comprehends all those who are "set apart" (consecrati), and who in virtue of that setting apart have right of exercising a certain Ministry. "Ordination" is the Act by which individuals are

admitted to this state or condition of life. An old writer contrasts Ordination and Orders thus: "Illa actionem significat: hic vero proprie statum ad quem actione illâ perveniunt."

And now go a step further. He Who ordains is God. S. Paul is very conclusive as to this. "And all things," he writes to the Corinthians, "are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." The Author of the great reconciliation through Jesus Christ, and the Author of the ministry of reconciliation, is one and the same. The High and Holy One Who in the counsels of eternity laid the great plan of man's Redemption, planned also the human Ministry, by which it was to be witnessed unto and brought home to a sinful world. Again and again the Apostle enforces this idea. In the nineteenth verse he repeats the same truth with a single verbal alteration: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. . . . and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation;" and still further he works out the idea in the twentieth verse, "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you." Now, we may not so expand this language as to make it comprehend all Christians.

True, it is a general duty to exhort and encourage one another; but here S. Paul is not writing to the heathen unbelievers, but to Christian converts; and he demands the earnest attention of those converts, because (this is the argument) of the special commission which he had received from God; "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you (believers in Christ) by us (messengers of Christ)."

Nor, on the other hand, do we seem justified in limiting the language to S. Paul himself or to his fellow-workers, the other Apostles. The necessity of the case cries out against such a limitation. Future generations would require, equally with the past, to have the work of Jesus Christ made known to them, urged upon their attention, brought home to their hearts. Nay, as the world receded further and further from the age when the Reconciliation was consummated upon Calvary, it would require more and more to be reminded of the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Cross.

Yet, again, we must guard against mistaking the Apostle's meaning by thinking of the "Ministry of reconciliation" as though it were identical with the "Ministry of reconciling."

The Ministry of reconciling belongs to Christ

alone. What is committed to us is the reconciliation once for all perfected by Him. The reconciliation is a fact in the world's history, accomplished eighteen hundred years ago. It is our Ministry to keep alive that fact in the world's memory, and to apply it to the souls of men; and here comes in our Office as dispensers of the Sacraments of the Gospel. "That saving grace," says Hooker, "which Christ originally is, by Sacraments He deriveth unto us." So, then, it is ours as Ministers of "the reconciliation," not only through our preaching to witness to the fact of the reconciliation wrought, but by baptizing with water in the Triune Name, by the Bread which we break and the Cup which we bless, to bring souls into contact with the reconciliation, and to sustain them in union with it.

The necessities of the case, therefore, preclude our restricting the Ministry of the reconciliation to the first age; and when we find (as in the Pastoral Epistles) the same S. Paul, who thus speaks, taking steps to perpetuate the same Ministry after he should be taken away, we must recognize him too as admitting the need of its continuance, and setting the seal of his own action upon its transmission from age to age.

But if so, then must that transmitted Ministry carry with it, even to the last days, the impress of its Divine original. As God hath committed it to S. Paul, so must the same God be regarded as entrusting it to me and to you. As he, who had been at Antioch separated to an Apostle's office by the Laying on of hands amid fastings and prayer, saw through that human veil the uplifted Hand of God, even so now you will fall far below the truth if, as you bow your heads on Sunday morning for the Laying on of the hands of Bishop and Presbyters, your soul penetrates no further than that outward scene, if you reduce that solemn Act, round which floats the incense of so many accumulated prayers, such strong crying for the coming of the Holy Ghost, to a mere device of man for emphasizing and attesting a human commission. In that moment let the words come to you with a new force: "Lift up your hearts." Lift them up beyond the earthly house, beyond the human instruments, unto the Lord, halting at no created intelligence, but seeing Him Who sitteth on the throne, and gathering together all the powers of your spirit, to receive with utter and entire self-devotion from His pierced Hands the Ministry of reconciliation.

And now, from this contemplation of God as the Invisible Ordainer, from the thought of that Mysterious Presence shrouded behind the human forms of those who are busied in the great Service, let us pass to the examination of some of the consequences to yourselves of being so ordained. To outward appearances you are the same men as heretofore. Friends and relations receive you again as one of themselves. Often, as they see, so they feel, no difference in you. Some will expect you to be in your manner, your amusements, your life, much the same as heretofore—will be, perhaps, displeased rather than otherwise if you alter your old habits. What then? Is there no difference? Has that hour in the Sanctuary, that might of Invocation, that mystical Laying on of hands, been nothing—a mere ceremony well got up, but impotent as to real effect? or if it has wrought a change, what has the change been? Can we analyse it, and by analysing help ourselves to appreciate it?

1. Ordination impresses a definite mark (χαρακτήρ) upon the ordained person. It has been defined as "Signum spirituale et indelebile anima impressum." The being impressed upon the soul, not the flesh, at once refers its origin to the Blessed Spirit. "The

office in which you are placed is," says Bishop Wilberforce, "a separated office, parted by the voice of God from all besides itself, endued by Him with an actual real being, diverse from the ordinary life even of common Saints; and this not of man's appointing, but of His, because God is present in new measure with the Church of Christ, and His indwelling severs His Ministry from all earthly offices." "For," writes S. Chrysostom (De Sacerdotio), "neither man, nor angel, nor archangel, nor any other creature but Himself the Paraclete hath ordained this calling." And hence it follows there can be no resignation of the Ministerial Office. We talk of a man "giving up his Orders," and recently the English legislature has provided a process by which he may, it is said, resign his Orders; but, after all, this is only the civil authority releasing a man from certain obligations which he has contracted with the State by taking Orders in a Church with which the State has allied itself, and relieving him from certain disabilities, on the other hand, which the civil government has imposed upon the ordained man. All the while the Divine seal, which stamped him as Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, upon his free offer of himself, remains unbroken. It is on the soul, whither the

fingers of human government reach not to efface it. It is set there by God, and the man's own will cannot remove it. He may cease to exercise his Office, from weariness or disappointment or unbelief, but he cannot dispossess himself of the Office. He still remains accountable to the Divine Master, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, for neglecting to fulfil the Ministry which he has received. If he fall into gross sin, it is the sin of a Priest, although years may have passed since he put on the vestments of the Ministry. He may have plunged, as some have done, into mere secular pursuits, politics, or law, and left behind, so as well-nigh to have forgotten, the occupations of the Deacon or the Priest; nevertheless, the seal is on his soul, and for the neglect of the duties which his Ordination bound upon him he must give account at the last.

My brethren, what you offer yourselves to the Lord to be made to-morrow—what He comes forth out of the thick darkness to make you upon this your self-oblation, that you must be, in life, in death, and in the great Rising.

II. Secondly, the Act of Ordination conveys a Spiritual Gift. This is apparent from the repeated language of S. Paul in the Pastoral Epistles:

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery;" and again in the second Epistle, "Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." We may profitably assign to this Gift a twofold nature.

A Gift of power—it is that which qualifies us to minister the Sacraments of the Gospel, with the assurance that, when so administered, they are valid instruments for the conveyance of grace to those who receive them worthily. The whole tenor of the Old and New Testaments (not isolated passages) goes to the recognition, both under the Law of shadows and the Gospel which is its substance, of a separated body of men Divinely authorized to minister to the general congregation of the faithful the things of God. If there were not under the Gospel such an appointed Ministry, it would scarcely answer to the prefigurements of the ancient dispensation; the correspondence between the type and the reality would be defective in one large feature. There is, in fact, no Institution of the Mosaic System which stands out more prominent than that of the Levitical Priesthood. More than any other Ordinance it permeates the whole organization. No other is so copiously

described. Four chapters of Exodus, six of Leviticus, four of Numbers are occupied with minutest regulations as to the personal qualifications of this hierarchy—their ordination, their duties. Their exclusive right to discharge those duties is hedged about by three distinct miracles of Judgment: in the case of Nadab and Abihu, Dathan and Abiram, Uzziah.

When you look more closely into the multifold laws of this Priesthood, you find certain main principles—a threefold division: the High Priest, Priests and Levites—the principle of succession, the manner of transmitting these Offices through successive ages.

Now, upon the principle of the typal relation of the dispensation of the Law to the dispensation of the Gospel, should we, or should we not, expect to find in the latter a Ministry which should answer, in the main points (although spiritualized), to the Ministry under the former?

The Catholic Church has from the beginning cherished such a Ministry as the framework of her whole system, believing its ministrations to be connected with the flow of the Divine Life of the Spirit through all the members of the Body. This is the Gift of power which Ordination conveys

to you—of power to bless the Bread and the Cup, so that it may be a Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ; of power to witness unto and expound His Truth; of power to bless His people in His Name, with the assurance of God's strength being manifested in your weakness.

Let me anticipate a difficulty with which you may be met. Is it pretended, you may be asked, that no preaching converts, that no ministrations are effective, no blessing avails, except through the Ministry of the Church?

My brethren, those few words which Hooker makes so much use of are your answer: "Deus non alligatur sacramentis."

His ordinances are laws for us, not for Him. He can and does, we believe, very amply bless the work of those who, from circumstances which we cannot judge, believe and live and labour in His Name outside the highway of His own appointments. So, we seem to gather, the sacrifice of Samuel at Gilgal and of Elijah on Mount Carmel found acceptance, although neither Samuel nor Elijah were of the seed of Aaron. Have this distinction clearly fixed in your minds, that you may thankfully recognize the manifest work of the Holy Ghost in those who are not outwardly of us

and none the less lovingly and loyally cling to the more complete inheritance which, by God's grace, has come down to you.

But who is sufficient for these things? Thus chosen, thus taken into the ranks of those who go in and out before the Holy One, thus transplanted into a new and irreversible relationship to Himself, thus invested with an Office to which it belongs to set in motion the powers of the world to come—who (well may ask the anxious souls) is sufficient for these things?

Here comes the second characteristic of the Ordination Gift. It is, as we have seen, a Gift of power. It is also a Gift of help. He Who places you in a new position in His Kingdom strengthens you for the climate to which He transfers you—to be Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord. Even so He Who sends the Messenger, puts fresh speed into the feet. He Who appoints the Watchman, clears off the film from the dull eye. He Who entrusts the Steward, lodges in him wisdom and discretion. This is the blessed encouragement which underlies the tremendous responsibilities of Ordination. If you offer yourselves with a single heart, if you are true in the vows which you make, if there is no reserve in your self-dedication, if you lift up

your heart to God for aid, then may you with a good courage take the Great Commission, not from my hands, but from our Master's, confident that you shall receive from Him at the same hour grace to fulfil your task. This is the real meaning of those most solemn words, "Receive the Holy Ghost." They are the gathering up, in one final petition for you severally, all those invocations of the Spirit which quicken the whole Service; they are the Church's last appeal for you to the Lord Almighty, that He will, according to His truth, fulfil in your case that type of all Ordinations, as set forth in the Ordination of the Apostles on the night of the Resurrection; they are the great prayer of the whole body of the faithful, that to each one of you, kneeling there in his childlike impotency, may be given, not a charge only, but a Gift of grace, real as the Breath of the Risen Lord which He breathed upon the Apostles—grace not such as is given for the perfecting of the Saints, but grace for the discharge of the special work of the Ministry—even a gift of wisdom and strength, a gift of sympathy and discerning of spirits, a gift of boldness and of fear, which may make you not only Ministers, but able Ministers of the New Testament. Cast your whole soul into that prayer, and He Who is "always more

ready to hear than we to pray" will not, in that turning-point of your lives, shut His ear to your supplication or to the intercession of His Church for you, but will, for the work to which He calls you, give in full measure His Holy Spirit to you that ask Him.

The Twofold Teaching of the Ordination Collects.

"Who by Thy Divine Providence hast appointed divers Orders of Ministers in Thy Church."

THE COLLECT FOR THE ORDERING OF DEACONS.

"Who by Thy Holy Spirit hast appointed divers Orders of Ministers in the Church."

THE COLLECT FOR THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS.

X.

The Twofold Teaching of the Ordination Collects.

The portion of the Ordination Service upon which I desire to fix your attention this evening, is the Collect which stands at the commencement of the Office for Holy Communion in the Ordering of Deacons, and which is repeated with a very significant change at the same place in the Ordering of Priests. And let me say here, that I hold it of the very utmost importance that you should study carefully, and with minute and lengthened reflection, every part of the Ordination Services. The fact is that the true position of the Church of England, what it claims to be and what it is, as distinguished from the multitude of sects around it, is embedded in the Ordinal more deeply, more indisputably, than in any other part of the Prayer-book. The line of demarcation between us and Nonconformist bodies is drawn most clearly at the question of Holy Orders. Here we may, in

argument, most logically take our stand. It is not whether the preaching of those without the English Church is or is not more searching, more awakening, than the preaching within it; whether Nonconformist bodies, in their independence of State control, in their greater simplicity of worship, are or are not more like the Primitive Church; it is not, primarily and chiefly, a question of Church government, a question between the advantages respectively of an Episcopal and a Presbyterian regimen, a monarchical and a republican rule; but the true question is whether there can be a valid Ministry having a Divine authority to minister the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and therein to "feed the flock of God" without the inheritance of Holy Orders handed down through Episcopal Laying on of hands from the Apostles and from Christ. The Church of England claims to possess this inheritance, and asserts its supreme importance. Nonconformists do not claim it, and make it of no account. Here is the real point of divergence, which must ever keep aloof the two parties, however, by Christian charity and the evidence of God's Spirit working according to His good pleasure in both, they may be drawn to respect and love each other. For we may never forget that the

resolute maintenance of a distinct fundamental principle need not, and should not, always affect individual friendship and good-will. Now, this doctrine of Holy Orders which, I say, lies at the root of the controversy between the Church and Nonconformists naturally stands out most clearly in the Ordination Services; and it is probably because an Ordination is seldom witnessed, perhaps never, by the bulk of Christian people (and the Ordination Services are, therefore, the least-known part of the Prayer-book) that the real question between the Church and Dissent is so little understood. It has probably contributed not a little to this ignorance, even amongst Church people, that until within a few years the Ordination Services were not so much as printed in the Prayer-books in common use; and even now, I suppose, in Sermons or Lectures on the Prayer-book, this portion is seldom made the subject of Parochial teaching. Thus the whole doctrine of a standing Ministry drops out of the mind of our congregations. I cannot but think that the four Ember Seasons might very properly be taken as opportunities for bringing these Services before our people. We should thereby open to them a comparatively new field of religious meditation, and give point and

interest to the Prayers which we, at such seasons, invite them to pray for those about to be ordained. At any rate, my brethren, these Services, and what has been written upon them, should never cease to be your study, that you may be thoroughly imbued with the mind of the Church upon the Office to which you have been called.

I have said that the Collect in the Ordinal, on which I would now fix your thought, occurs in the Offices for the Ordination of Priests and Deacons with one significant variation. In the Ordering of Deacons it runs thus: "Almighty God, Who by Thy Divine Providence hast appointed divers Orders in Thy Church." In the Ordering of Priests it is: "Almighty God, giver of all good things, Who by Thy Holy Spirit hast appointed divers Orders of Ministers in the Church." What is in one place attributed to the operations of God's Providence is in the other assigned to the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Both are in harmony, and require to be thoroughly recognized, if we would not be betrayed into error on the right hand or the left.

I. Let us take, first, the Collect as it stands in the Ordering of Deacons.

What are we to understand by the Threefold Ministry of the Catholic Church being the creation

of the Divine Providence? It has been sought more than once to show how the organization of the Christian Church was, after all, but an adaptation of the constitution of the Synagogue, as it existed amongst the Jews, and of the private confraternities and smaller municipalities, as they were found throughout the Roman world, when Christianity first arose; how from the directors of the Synagogue there came the term πρεσβύτεροι, and from the Roman associations the term ἐπίσκοποι. Now, it is by no means necessary to affirm that there is no truth in such a theory; on the contrary, many of the features of the scheme coincide with parts of the New Testament. Thus, the Book of the Acts represents the twelve Apostles as at first the sole directors and administrators of the Church. For the financial business of the infant Community, not less than for its spiritual guidance, they alone are responsible. Such a state of things could not last if the Church were to fulfil the command of universal teaching and making disciples of all nations. Very early, therefore, you have the appointment of the seven Deacons, primarily to relieve the Apostles from the works of charitable distributions, but also, as appears from the story of Philip in Samaria, to teach and to baptize. Nominated by the Church

at large, they received a religious consecration to their Office from the original Apostles of Christ by the Laying on of hands with prayer, and so became an ORDO of apostolic origin. Hence Polycarp, in his Epistles, lifts them emphatically above the level of mere assistants of men, by calling them, ὡς Θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ διάκονοι καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώπων. Here you have the first illustration of the language of the Collect. The Order of Deacons was eminently the outcome of a Divine Providence. The enlargement of the Church, the discontent of the widows of the Hellenistic converts—not any distinct oracle of God—brought about this appointment. They are the children of the prosperity and the need, of the strength and the weakness of the growing Kingdom.

The sixth chapter of the Acts introduces the Order of Deacons. The eleventh chapter contains the first mention of the πρεσβύτεροι. Their origin is in striking contrast with that of the διάκονοι. S. Luke's account of the institution of the Diaconate is full and precise; he tells us nothing of the circumstances under which the Presbyterate arose. When he first mentions it, he does so incidentally. The Gentile Christians at Antioch, in the prospect of an impending famine, resolve to send relief to the brethren in Judea. This they did, and "sent

it," S. Luke writes, "to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." This would be, according to the common chronology, about A.D. 43. What had called forth the new Order we know not; we have no list of the names of the first Presbyters as we have of the new Deacons. When first mentioned by S. Luke, they are mentioned as in known existence at Jerusalem. But it has been suggested that as the first Persecution, in which S. Stephen suffered, arose immediately upon the appointment of the Diaconate, which, as marking the consolidation and growth of the Christian Body, had provoked anew the anger of the Jews, so the second Persecution, in which S. James was killed with the sword, may in all likelihood have arisen from similar feelings upon the appointment of Presbyters—a further step still in the organisation of the Christian Community. This consideration does not, however, throw any light upon the immediate cause of the institution of Elders, but it goes far to connect it with the presence in Jerusalem of S. James and S. Peter, and invests the Presbyterate in its very commencement with the solemn recognition of S. Barnabas and S. Paul. From that time the history makes constant mention of the Presbyters or Elders, and the Pastoral Epistles give direction for their appointment and their discipline.

But the Commission of the Apostolic Twelve had not exhausted itself by the appointment of Deacons and Presbyters. There slept in the Apostolate yet another Office. It is probably the natural tendency of all bodies of co-equal members to develop a President or Chief. The tendency first showed itself at Jerusalem, in the elevation of James, the Lord's brother. A further sign of the growth of the same discipline is found in the position of Timothy and Titus.

The threefold Ministry was, then, the gradual growth of the first hundred years, drawn out step by step through the changing circumstances of the Church; and this is what seems to be intended by the language of the Collect, "Who by Thy Divine Providence hast appointed divers Orders in Thy Church."

II. But now turn to the Collect in the Ordering of Priests: "Who by Thy Holy Spirit hast appointed divers Orders in The Church." Here is the grand counter truth which corrects and adjusts our conceptions of that series of events which I have now delineated. The threefold Ministry grew out of the course of this world; but is that threefold Ministry, therefore, an accident of history—a thing of mere human device, which may be abandoned

or altered, if we will? Not so. Over and above the various circumstances which developed this Ministry, you must recognize the Holy Ghost teaching the infant Church how to deal with those circumstances as they arose, suggesting the step to be taken, and sealing it ever by the mighty impulse with which the faith of Christ advanced. Do you reply that this reasoning would justify us in varying from the model bequeathed? that if that model was the outcome of the course of events, and of the efforts of holy men to meet them, so the model may again be changed by the living Church, if it so seem expedient? The Ministry of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, these divers Orders, were the product of the first century whilst Apostles were still upon the earth, to whom the Lord had promised the full guidance of the Holy Ghost, and whom He had invested with miraculous powers. No after generation can, from the very nature of the case, be paralleled with that generation of believers. If the growth of the threefold Ministry had been distributed over four hundred years, it might have established no such claim to Divine origin as would have given it a title to perpetuity; but its development being shut up within the Apostolic period invests it with the character of a fundamental constitutional law.

There is, indeed, a great analogy between the history of the New Testament and of the Christian Ministry. The Gospels and Epistles were the offspring of the requirement of successive periods of the Apostolic age. The writers wrote to meet a present need; and, nevertheless, in what they wrote they were guided by One mightier than themselves: yea, so guided that the Church has ever drawn a great border-line between their books and the most learned and devout books of other men. The sacred Canon of the New Testament is born and perfected within the first age, a thing completed whilst the extraordinary gifts of the Blessed Spirit were still diffused abroad, and placed thereby upon a height of authority to which no later documents might aspire. And something in the same way the original Commission of the Apostles developed its wealth of resources, according as God's Providence shaped the wants of the Church; but the development was begun and ended within the age of miracle and sign, and so the Divine Orders of the Ministry, like the Divine Books of the New Testament, remain alike the product of the Divine Providence and of the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost in the days of His mightiest outpourings.

My brethren, it is most essential that in these

times of sharp controversy we should have clear and well-defined to our own minds what position is ours. You will meet in your parishes, in society, in books which profess to speak the common sense of the age, the same expression of surprise that the Clergy of the Church of England should assume, by virtue of their Orders, a higher and more sacred character than belongs to the man who teaches and ministers without these Orders. Why, it is said, will you not be content with the respectable position of officers of the National Religion, and consent to give up your claims, which are uncongenial with modern opinions? Yes, if we would drop the old-fashioned notion that the Church is the Body of Christ, that we are servants of the Crucified, with powers committed to us through the Dispensation of the Holy Ghost, which man gave not and which man cannot take away—a supernatural kingdom around us and within us,—we might be as gods to an appreciating people. And this is the subtle temptation which you have to meet. God grant you may not fall into the snare. To sink or abandon your position as members of a Divinely appointed Ministry is to give up that, in the power of which alone the Church has contended with any degree of success with the sin and unbelief of eighteen

centuries. Renounce your Apostolical Commission, consent to regard it as from man, you will be surrendering your most trustworthy weapon. Infidelity and schism will not be won over by the Ministers of the Church of God descending from their own level to that of those with whom they wrestle. Popular or unpopular, we must hold fast the tradition we have received. But, then, it becomes important neither to overstate nor understate the argument. It is against this, what I have said to-day is meant to guard.

Whilst vindicating our Holy Orders as the work of the Blessed Spirit, we need not deny that through human strifes and unworthiness He has perfected His will. Still less let us be betrayed into stopping short at the external history, and losing sight of the Divine informing Spiration of the Holy Ghost.

And but a few sentences more. I leave for another time the supplications with which the two Ordination Collects conclude; that, both by word and good example, you may faithfully serve Him in your Office of Priest or Deacon, to the glory of His Name, and the edification of His Church. And yet, I may not stop without reminding you that to the common crowd among whom you have to labour, the simplest, most heart-reaching proof of the

Divinity of the Orders you receive will be the loving patience, the single-minded zeal for the salvation of men, which, in preaching the Word and ministering the Sacraments and preparing the dying, you shall exhibit in your daily going out and coming in before them.

Truth of Doctrine and Innocency of Life.

"Replenish them so with the truth of Thy doctrine, and adorn them with innocency of life, that, both by word and good example, they may faithfully serve Thee in this Office, to the glory of Thy Name, and the edification of Thy Church."

THE COLLECT FROM THE OFFICES FOR THE ORDERING OF DEACONS AND PRIESTS.

XI.

Truth of Doctrine and Innocency of Life.

I SPOKE to you a year ago upon the first part of the Collect in the Office for the Ordering of Deacons and Priests, and pointed out how these two grades of the sacred Ministry came into existence within the lifetime of the Apostles, by the joint operation of outward circumstances, and of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as it is said in the Ordering of Priests. I wish now to speak of the second portion of the same Collect. The first portion, like that of every Collect, consists of the Invocation of Almighty God with such reference to some Divine attribute or act as may form a suitable basis for the second portion, which contains the petition itself. This petition in the Collect now before us is the same for the Deacons and the Priests. It runs thus: "Mercifully behold these Thy servants now called to the like Office and Administration [as was S. Stephen the deacon], or now called to the Office of the Priesthood; and replenish them so with the truth of Thy doctrine, and adorn

them with innocency of life, that, both by word and good example, they may faithfully serve Thee in this Office, to the glory of Thy Name, and the edification of Thy Church." This is the prayer proper, a prayer for certain definite spiritual graces with a certain definite object.

I. But before drawing out the teaching of this pregnant supplication, there are two preliminary points to be noticed.

1. Observe, first, the clear light which the Collect throws upon the relative position of the Diaconate to the Priesthood. The Collect, after making mention of S. Stephen, proceeds, "Mercifully behold these Thy servants now called to the like office and administration." Turn to the account of the appointment of the seven Deacons, and you find that it is essentially an assistant or subordinate Office. So in a later part of the Service it is laid down in a kind of legal enactment: "It appertaineth to the office of a Deacon, in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the Priest in Divine Service, and specially when he ministereth the Holy Communion, and to help him in the distribution thereof." Again, "In the absence of the Priest to baptize infants." And in this connection you may notice the language in which the

Diaconate and Priesthood are described in the respective Collects. Both Deacons and Priests are said to be called to an office. But the Deacons are said to be called to an Office and Administration. The Latin word is "ministerium," and it implies the waiting on a superior. This subordinate character of the "ministerium" is marked by the rule that a Deacon is admitted to his Diaconate by the laying on of the hands of the Bishop alone, whereas the Priesthood is more solemnly conferred with the conjoint Imposition of the hands of the Presbytery. This distinction is as old as the Fourth Council of Carthage, which enacts, "Diaconus cum ordinatur solus episcopus qui eum benedicit manum imponit super caput illius quia non ad sacerdotium sed ad ministerium consecratur."

Now, I have thought it worth while to dwell upon this point because the tendency of modern usage has undoubtedly been to ignore, in a great measure, the radical difference between the Deacon and Priest. A Deacon is not uncommonly placed in sole charge of a congregation, a Priest appearing from time to time to celebrate the Holy Communion. When there is no Celebration, the Deacon is often left wholly to himself. Hence follows another irregularity. The Deacon goes not unfrequently to the Altar and reads

the Ante-Communion service, *i.e.* he opens the great Eucharistic Office which he cannot complete. So again the Deacon, by custom, solemnizes marriages, although the Service throughout, by its whole tone, as well as by the two Blessings which form part of it, implies that the officiating Clergyman is a Priest. And this obscuring the inherent difference between the Deacon and the Priest leads occasionally to worse. I have myself had brought under my notice the case of a Deacon consecrating and administering the Blessed Sacrament to a sick person, and I was surprised to find the idea to be that in a private Communion the act was lawful, the real fact being that not only was it a violation of all Ecclesiastical law, but of the law of England also. The Act of Uniformity provides that no person shall presume to consecrate and administer the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper before such time as he shall be ordained Priest, according to the form and manner in the said Book prescribed, unless he has formerly been made Priest by Episcopal Ordination, upon pain to forfeit for every offence £100, and to be disabled from being admitted to the Order of Priest for the space of one year next following.

Let me take this opportunity of reminding you of the loss to himself which a man incurs who leaves

his first curacy before he has fulfilled his two years and received his Priest's Orders. If he leaves as a Deacon, he is really an Ecclesiastical waif and stray. Into some Dioceses he will be absolutely refused admission. In all he will experience great difficulties as to being licensed and obtaining subsequent Ordination to the Priesthood. And why? Because he has sundered prematurely his relations to a Priest, and therefore finds difficulties besetting him at every step when he attempts to stand alone.

2. The second preliminary observation I would make is that both Deacons and Priests, although thus radically different in spiritual powers and gifts, are both members of one distinct class—the Divine Ministry. Both are separated unto the Gospel of Christ. The outward severance of Clergy and Laity belongs to the fourth century. During earlier ages of persecution, there existed, doubtless, the same Orders of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon as are continued among us; but they could have no recognition from the heathen world, no sanction from the Imperial Government. If they escaped confiscation and death, it was a matter of thankfulness. The most eminent places in the Church were the posts of greatest danger. But with the conversion of Constantine a new epoch began. What had been the

profession of a persecuted sect became the religion of the empire, and forthwith the division of Laity and Clergy, and the subdivisions of the Clerical Order within itself gradually obtained the distinct recognition of the Supreme Government.

I will trace the process for you. (1) In the year 313 A.D., Constantine issued an edict exempting the Christian Clergy from the obligation of filling municipal offices—offices, *i.e.*, involving not only a sacrifice of time and labour, but also heavy expenditure. The principle on which such exemption was founded being that the ministration in things spiritual was, or ought to be, enough to occupy exclusively the mental and bodily energies of the Clergy. About forty years later, the Council of Chalcedon followed the action of the State in exonerating the Clergy from the burden of secular offices, by prohibiting them under pain of anathema from volunteering to undertake such offices, to serve in the army, or in any secular magistracy. Thus, you see, the Clergy were first exempted, then debarred from the exercise of civil offices. One step yet remained. In the middle of the sixth century, Justinian forbade a civil officer to become a Bishop or Priest; and so the severance of the Laity and Clergy as to official duties was completed from both

sides. (2) The second step in the separation of Clergy and Laity was the permission at first, and somewhat later the ordering, that the Clerical body should be tried in courts of their own, in regard to all matters pertaining to religion. This may be referred to the very beginning of the fifth century. (3) The third step in the process was the license to the Church to hold lands and other property. It became, as we should say, a corporation empowered to receive bequests of money and conveyance of estates. Many, indeed, of the endowments of heathen temples were transferred to Christian Churches. I have myself been told by Sir. H. Maine, that in the East of Europe and in Asia the same lands which are now the endowments of Mohammedan Mosques were once held by the Christian Church, and at an earlier date by the priests of an ancient Paganism; so early, in God's good Providence, was developed in the Christian Church that condition of things which we have inherited. The fires of persecution had scarcely died down before the Divine Ministry, which had existed from the beginning in its essential characteristics, its threefold Order and Apostolic Succession, stood forth a recognized element of the social system of the ancient world, with privileges and responsibilities which in a great measure have lasted until

now. The endurance of fifteen hundred years, the conversion of the Roman Empire, of the Northern Barbarians, as in later days they broke in upon it, their own castigation when they had destroyed the civilization of the old Imperial world, have been the successive seals placed by the Providence of God upon that which was then wrought out, with little perception it may be by the actors of the vastness and perpetuity of the system they were inaugurating. Into this system you have been, or are about to be, grafted—to inherit at once its strength and its temptations, its powers and its responsibilities. Let us see what, upon this basis, is the prayer we should pray and the life we should lead.

II. Two objects are proposed as the mark to be aimed at by both Priest and Deacon—the glory of God, and the edification of His Church. Two means of attaining these ends are indicated—truth of doctrine, and innocency of life: "Replenish them so with the truth of Thy doctrine, and adorn them with innocency of life, that, both by word and good example, they may faithfully serve Thee in this Office, to the glory of Thy Name, and the edification of Thy Church."

My brethren in the Ministry, let no sophistical arguments, no impatience of Ecclesiastical restraints,

no eagerness for more immediate results, tempt you to think for a moment that God's glory can be promoted by any line of action or teaching which does not tend to the establishing and increasing of the spiritual influence of the Church of Christ. It is by no means uncommon for a Clergyman to grow weary after a while of walking in the old Church paths, preaching the old Church doctrines, saying the same old Services, maintaining the same Church position. The people do not, they tell you, seem to respond to all this. The thought of the age is opposed to it; so they are led to have recourse to what seems to promise more results, to fraternize with Nonconformity, to admit the notion that while Churchmen and Dissenters both show beyond doubt the work of God's grace in their hearts, there can be no reason why they should not act together in their ministrations, stand side by side in religious assemblies, pray alternately and exhort alternately. Will not, it is asked, such union of good men in religious action have more effect upon the outside world, tend more to the glory of God, than the refusing to combine in preaching, as they combine upon social and charitable and political questions without reproach?

"To the glory of Thy name and the edification

of Thy Church." This is the key-note of your Ministry, this the condition upon which you receive the Church's Ordination, that you will never in act or thought separate between the glory of Christ and the building up of His Church or Kingdom. The two things are, in point of fact, not separable. Step forth from your Church platform, you may appear for a while to create more interest, to stir in wider circles the stagnant waters around you. The very novelty of a Clergyman taking such a course is sure to attract gazers and hearers. You may receive a hollow applause, as having shown yourself superior to the narrow traditions which you have inherited. But sooner or later the bubble will burst; those whom at first you seemed to draw will fall away, lured by stranger novelties still. The Church will have been weakened (this, perhaps, you may have ventured to risk), but neither in the end will the glory of God have been promoted.

And as the end of your Ministry is twofold, yet one—for, as I have shadowed forth, God's glory is to be sought in the edification of His Church—so likewise is the instrumentality twofold. You are to seek to build up God's Church and glorify God, by truth of doctrine and purity of life.

Truth of Doctrine. It may at times seem to you

a matter of indifference, in addressing a mixed congregation, to be very accurate in your doctrinal statements. Perhaps you know that there are among those who listen many of different opinions, or perhaps, if your lot is cast in a country village, there is scarcely any one amongst those who sit before you who could detect a misstatement of dogmatic truth, and so you are tempted to speak or write carelessly, as though with such an audience no ill could come of it. Vain confidence! If you throw yourself into the spirit of the Collect as of the whole Ordination Service, of which it is a part, you will feel it your bounden duty to study, to think, to prepare your sermons with as much carefulness and fulness as to "truth of doctrine" as if you were addressing a thoroughly intellectual audience. It is not safe ever to risk misstatements of doctrine, nor is it lawful to avoid doctrinal preaching altogether because those who listen are not the learned of this world; and for this reason, truth of doctrine is a Divine Revelation. The truth of God has in it a Divine power to move the heart and touch the will. It is in S. Paul's language "the sword of the Spirit." But misrepresent the doctrine, abate from the doctrine, add to the doctrine, and the weapon which you

wield is no longer a weapon drawn from the Divine armoury; it has been modified by you into an invention of man, and you cannot look to it to produce the same effect. It will be no longer quick and powerful, no longer able to divide the joints and marrow, to penetrate the thoughts and intents of the heart. Church History is full of illustrations in every age, that it is doctrinal preaching which not only instructs, but kindles and inflames the affections of the soul. A feeble doctrinal system has never produced any great or lasting effect upon the world of men.

Innocency of life. Here is the second power by which we are to advance the Kingdom of Christ and His glory. Set in the varying lots of your inheritance, some it may be in a crowded town, some in a quiet hamlet, you are to be in your own lives patterns of what the doctrine of Christ can make a man. What men see you to be that they will probably hold to be the outcome of your opinions. It is, indeed, illogical enough to argue from the teacher's life to the truth of what he teaches, and the world is ready enough to point the finger of condemnation at the Clergyman who, by his manner of living, breaks the Law of God which he preaches. But none the less, while they

judge the worldly Clergyman out of his own mouth, will they, on the other hand, measure the truth of his message by his own obedience to it; and whilst they use the word which he preaches in order to condemn his conduct, they will certainly, though inconsistently, use his own unworthy conduct as a ground on which to disparage the verity of what he delivers. "Ye"—they were Christ's own words as He marked them, a little company in the midst of a corrupt world—"Ye are the salt of the earth." We may take up the Divine utterance as His charge to His Ministers unto the end. To repel the corrupting process which is ever going on in the gross lump of humanity; to be centres from which shall radiate light into surrounding darkness; so to live and speak that men may take note of us that we have been with Jesus; to have that which, in our speech and manner in society as well as in official acts, shall mark us as being His delegates; this is our vocation.

I have traced the process by which the Clergy grew in the course of God's Providence to be recognized as a distinct Order. That distinct Order is, I believe, as much of Divine authority as though it had been founded on a special enactment unmistakably enunciated. But it is idle to dwell upon our

separation as a Divine Order from the institutions of this world, if in our conduct we identify ourselves with the world. A distinct Order involves a distinct standard of life and action. It should be manifested by the habits and practices of those who belong to it, otherwise the whole Divinity which pertains to it will be denied, and the world will trample it in the mire of the streets. They are grand words of S. Augustine:

> Cujus vita fulgur
> Ejus verba tonitru.

The tongue which sets forth the grace of Orders, the power of the Sacraments which we minister, the might of the Doctrine which it is ours to preach, —that tongue will only awaken men's awe and bow down their hearts, if the lives of those who speak and minister flash out with the signs of the Indwelling Spirit of burning. We are accustomed even now, and with reason, to enlarge upon the hallowing influence of the Parish Priest dwelling among his own people. How infinitely might that power for good be increased if every such Clergyman witnessed to his high commission by a life wholly absorbed into his lofty work, simple, earnest, and devoted to the Glory of God and the edification of His Church!

The High Dignity and Weighty Office.

"Have in remembrance into how high a Dignity, and to how weighty an Office and Charge ye are called: that is to say, to be Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord; to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever."

OFFICE FOR THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS.

XII.

The High Dignity and Weighty Office.

I HAVE during several years past made some one of the various features of our Ordination Services the subject of my charge. I propose to-night (and on some future occasions, if God will) to dwell upon certain of the salient passages in that most solemn and weighty address in which the Bishop is directed to exhort the Candidates for the Priesthood.

"The Prayer-book," it has been eloquently said, "as it stands, is a long Gallery of Ecclesiastical History, which, to be understood and enjoyed thoroughly, absolutely compels a knowledge of the greatest events and names of all periods of the Christian Church.

"To Ambrose, we owe the present form of our *Te Deum*. Charlemagne breaks the silence of our Ordination Prayers by the *Veni, Creator*. The Persecutions have given us one Creed, and the Roman Empire another. The name of the first great Patriarch of the Byzantine Church closes our

daily Service. The Litany is the bequest of the first great Patriarch of the Latin Church, amidst the terrors of the Roman pestilence. Our Collects are the joint productions of the Fathers, the Popes, and the Reformers. Our Communion Service bears the traces of every fluctuation of the Reformation, (through the two extremes of the reign of Edward to the conciliatory policy of Elizabeth and the reactionary zeal of the Restoration). The more comprehensive, the more free, the more impartial our study of any or every branch of Ecclesiastical History, the more will it be in accordance with the spirit and with the letter of the Church of England."

The writer might have added to these illustrations that the Table for finding Easter and that of the Golden Numbers, which meet us in the forefront of the Prayer-book, are the bequest of the Council of Nicea, and associated with the ἐπιστολαὶ ἑορταστικαί, the Festal letters, in which the great Athanasius, as Bishop of Alexandria, announced to the Christian world the day on which Easter would fall. Nor is it, perhaps, unworthy of note how this gathering together the devotional characteristics of the Church of all places and times in the English Prayer-book seems to be one of those

Divine providences by which the English Church is better qualified than any other to follow, with the Faith and ministrations of Christ, the track of the great colonizing Anglo-Saxon race into every quarter of the globe.

The Exhortation to the Candidates for the Priesthood is the special contribution to the Office of the Reformation Period. It may indeed be said generally, that to that age we owe almost if not quite all the Exhortations which are interspersed through our Services. The motive of these is not far to seek, and it is well to remember it, if we are sometimes tempted to wish the Exhortations away, as interrupting the onward progress of the Act of Worship and wearying rather than edifying through constant repetition. When the English divines of the sixteenth century came to deal with the Public Worship of the Church, they found themselves confronted with congregations who had probably an implicit faith in the grace of Sacraments, but little knowledge as to what constituted a worthy reception of Sacraments. The outward Act had come, from lack of instruction, to be regarded as enough. Hence the prominence which Hooker gives to the principle that Sacraments are not mechanical instruments, but moral instruments of

grace, the use whereof is in our hands, the effect in the Hand of Christ; for the use of which we have His express commandment, for the effect His conditional promise. It was to stir up in the untaught multitudes the sense of the need of a moral preparation and fitness in those who would secure the benefit attached to Sacramental Ordinances, that Exhortations long and fervent were introduced into the public Offices of the Church. The object was, in spite of the ignorance of the age and a non-preaching Clergy, to insure, if possible, in those who approached the Sacrament, some knowledge of what was requisite in themselves, if they would not lose the personal benefit conditionally promised. And so with the Exhortation before us. We can have, I think, no doubt of the carelessness with which in Mediæval times Holy Orders were given. When all the offices of civil government and of the law were filled by ordained men, there could have been little realization in those thus absorbed into worldly business of the duty bound upon every Priest "to teach, and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world." In handling the Ordination Services, the Anglican

Reformers had not only to maintain, as in the Preface to the Ordinal, the Apostolical Succession as the true and only solid structure of the Ministry, but to awaken in the hearts of those who entered it an adequate conception of the duties which they had to perform and the responsibilities which they incurred. The grace of Orders demanded, like the grace of the Holy Eucharist, a soul receptive of it.

And thus I am brought to the opening words of this Exhortation, which, let me say in passing, often as I have had during a quarter of a century to hear or read it, seems to me to lose nothing of its solemn impressiveness and tender sympathy, but lies in the midst of the many movements of the Ordination Ceremonial, like a still grove in the midst of an exciting journey, where the mind may rest for a while amid holy thoughts and pious musings, and compose itself for what remains to be done. "We exhort you"—these are the words I would fix in your hearts to-night—"in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance, into how high a Dignity, and to how weighty an Office and Charge ye are called," or, as it is just before expressed, "of what dignity, and of how great importance this Office is."

Two things are marked out for your remembrance: (1) The high Dignity, (2) The weighty Charge, of the Priesthood. Let me speak to you of each in turn.

I. And in speaking, first, of the dignity of the Priestly Office, let me urge upon you that this dignity lies wholly in the region of spiritual things. I know no more pitiable spectacle than that of the Clergyman of a Parish squabbling with his Churchwardens or Parishioners about his rights, or assuming in language or manner the character of social superiority. It is this which constitutes oftentimes the misery of Parishes, and paralyses the work of the Ministry, placing Priest and people in two opposite camps, in a contest having respect (if not, as often happens, to fees and dues) to personal importance and private advantage. The true dignity of the Priesthood is of a wholly different kind from this.

Nor, again, does it grow out of such a fact as that of the Christian Priesthood being a special "caste" within the Church, isolated, and apart from the residue of the Christian body. The true idea is, indeed, the very reverse. The Christian Priesthood is, properly considered, the representative of the Priesthood of the whole Fellowship of Christ.

"Ye," says S. Peter to the Church of his day, "are a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood." The last phrase is identical with the words in which Moses was directed by God to address the Israelites, "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of Priests."

Every baptized man has by his Baptism the inalienable right of personal access to the Throne of God, to offer his prayers and praises, to plead the one all-sufficient Sacrifice; so that if you can suppose an individual Christian cut off from all intercourse with his fellows, he would still have, not merely as a creature, but as the member of a great Priestly Community, such a special privilege of standing up before the Lord as would insure his own acceptance with God. But the very necessities of order and reverence demand that, when the company of the baptized join in an united act of worship, there should be some leader of their prayers and praises. Hence the need of an Order who should, in worship and in the ministration of the affairs of the Spiritual Kingdom, be the acting delegates of the entire body—representing it before God and before the world. And the Lord said unto Moses, "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet [or, 'spokesman']." The words exactly shadow forth the position of the Christian Ministry

as the mouth of the Christian Body. And as illustrating this representative character of the Christian Priesthood, I would have you notice how, in even the administration of the Sacraments, the whole assembled congregation is associated with the Priestly spokesman in all that is said and done.

In the bringing of every child to Baptism, the Minister associates himself and the people together: "Wherefore, we being thus persuaded of the good will of our heavenly Father towards this infant, declared by His Son Jesus Christ, and nothing doubting but that He favourably alloweth this charitable work of ours in bringing this infant to His Holy Baptism." The supplications of the congregation are the basis of the petition that the water may be sanctified to the mystical washing away of sin. Only for a moment is the plural number dropped, and the individual who dips the child in the water speaks of himself in the singular: "I baptize thee;" and even this change is not supported by the usage of the Eastern Churches, where the formula runs, "N., the servant of God, is baptized in the Name," &c., whilst in our Office the people are immediately reassumed as parties to the act of reception: "*We* receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock."

In the Order for the Celebration of the Holy

Communion, the union of the people with the Priest in the "Sacrificium Commemorativum" is still more emphatic. The Prayer which more especially brings out this doctrine calls up, as it were, the latent Priesthood of every baptized man for the great Act; "We desire Thy Fatherly goodness to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, . . . and although we be unworthy to offer unto Thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech Thee to accept this our bounden duty and service." "There can, I suppose," says a living Bishop, "be no doubt that in the language of Holy Scripture it is the Church entire and complete, not any class or rank or caste of persons within it, which is spoken of as the Spirit-bearing Body of Christ, the successor of Christ, the holder of power and privilege in Christ, nay, even as Christ Himself upon the earth." "If, again," he says, "an ordinary Parish Priest teaches his people, he still speaks as the 'parson;' that is, as bearing in his small sphere the 'persona' of the Church."

Is, then, the Christian Ministry nothing but a delegate of the Christian Fellowship? Is their Office wholly of the earth, earthy—derived from men—and so liable to be recalled, changed, modified by men? Not so. Here comes in another truth;

The representative Priesthood, which gathers up into itself and expresses the latent Priestly gifts of the whole Kingdom of Christ, has been recognized and sealed by the Divine Hand. The seven Deacons were thus chosen and presented by the Christian Community, but the Apostles, with the Pentecostal Gift fresh upon them, appointed (we read) those Seven over the business for which they had been chosen by the Community; "And when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them." So, again, with Timothy: mysterious prophecies preluded his appointment—prophecies of the gifts and successes of his after course; but not the less must he be sealed with the Imposition of the hands of an Apostle.

And so in continual succession has the Christian Priesthood received from age to age the Divine sealing; and thus, while never losing its character as representative of the whole Body, and by its organic connection with the Body perpetuating its own vitality, it has been redeemed from the danger of being dependent upon the will of the living Body, so as to be liable to change or suspension at the voice of passion, or prejudice, or seeming expediency. Let me sum up what I would enforce in the words of the late Bishop of Salisbury. They are these:

"This is, then, the position which I desire to take, that while, on the one hand, the Spirit-bearing Church in all its members is the ultimate possessor of every sort of Divine power and privilege in and under Christ the Head, so that the persons who exercise spiritual office within it are, in strictness of speech, real representatives of the body of which they are thus made to be the organs; on the other hand, it is most true and most earnestly to be maintained that they also hold, by direct descent from the Apostles, the gift confined to the Apostolic Laying on of hands, which gift empowers, enables, and authorizes them, as nothing else can do, to discharge those offices and exercise those powers which, thus in the name and on behalf of the whole Church, they discharge and execute towards the separate members of it."

It is a gracious balance indeed which has thus been achieved.

On the one hand, the Christian Ministry can never become a religious sect within the Church, because it has nothing which does not primarily reside in the whole Body; on the other hand, it can never become the mere creature of the Body, because its constitution was Divinely sealed in the beginning. And herein lies the true dignity of the Ministry

of Christ; it consists not in the self-sufficient isolation of incommunicable powers, but in the keen sense of nearest affinity with the great Body of the Faithful, of the interpenetration of its life with the life of the Body. To be in closest bond and sympathy is by its very organization its highest perfection.

II. The weighty Charge of the Priesthood:—"Consider, it is said, "to how weighty an Office and Charge ye are called;" and the Exhortation proceeds to enlarge upon the greatness of the Charge by breaking up the general idea into three heads, "That is to say, to be Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord;" and the threefold task is yet further unfolded by the triple duties specified, "to teach, and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family."

1. You are the Lord's Messengers "to teach." Such were they who in the first fulness of the Pentecostal outpouring went forth to make known the Gospel of God's grace in Christ. Their task was, in the widest sense, to communicate a new message from heaven to earth, new in the mightiness of its promises, new in the laws of purity and righteousness and charity which it enforced. To those who go forth to carry Christianity into the dark portions of the still heathen world, that Apostolic charge

of bearing God's message to those who have never heard it continues yet in its whole breadth of meaning. To you whose call is rather to minister in a country in which Christianity has for centuries been the professed faith of the people, it may indeed be not altogether a new message which you have to deliver; and yet is it true, that whilst you will find in your parishes a general idea of the Gospel, that idea is wofully deficient, sometimes grievously erroneous. It consists too often in the parrot-like repetition of a few set phrases about God's mercy and faith in Jesus Christ, rather than in a knowledge of what is really required of a Christian man.

Our Sermons, as a rule, are far too exclusively hortatory in their character. Men and women, whose weeks are weeks of exhausting labour and absorbing occupation, are urged, allured, threatened, as though their will alone had to be stirred; whereas really there are thousands who are disposed to religion, but who know not how to begin to be religious. The labouring classes want to learn. The Clergyman is apt to assume that they know enough if only they would do what they know. Really, they require to be taught prayers to say, to be taught how to communicate, how to examine their own hearts and lives, how to meet a temptation,

how to recover themselves from a fall. Close personal relations between the English Clergyman and his people have so faded out that we dream not, many of us, how blank is the mind of those to whom we preach Sunday after Sunday as to the first rudiments of holy living, how much of childlike guidance is required, with regard to themselves, their children, their daily life. I am well aware how difficult it will be to give this minute personal instruction, but, depend upon it, the general pulpit exhortation will not meet the need of this our day. It may fill the Church, if it be fluent and animated; it will not model the lives of those who listen, unless they who preach find opportunities, and acquire the skill, also "to teach."

2. But you are also "Watchmen to premonish." This is a very special task. It is the duty of the watchman on the walls which is here indicated; and that old word "premonish" is carefully chosen. It does not mean the same as monish. It means what it says, the "monishing beforehand," the looking out as from a tower so as to be able to discern betimes approaching danger, and give notice to prepare. The image touches one of the most delicate duties of the spiritual guide. It is a call to acquaint himself with the special circumstances of his

people, the difficulties of their position, the trials of their way of life—whatever constitutes, in short, their probation; nay more, to obtain as far as possible an insight into the character of those whom he has to lead, to note with discriminating eyes their weakness and their strength, the passions which are strongest, the good qualities which are weakest in them, where and how their temptation is likely to arise; and to warn them beforehand where the peril lies, and so, if it may be, to anticipate and prevent the threatened ruin. In dealing with Confirmation candidates, with the elder children in your schools, with young men of your Bible-class, there will be abundant opportunities for this premonishing care. And it is especially important, because, first, a fall into some sin is so apt to be the signal for an entire abandonment of the ways of religion, as though the shame of it were at once banishment from the love of God and man; and because, secondly, the having premonished a person of the danger of spiritual temptation, affords a basis for approaching him, if he fall, with sympathy and encouragement, and so for preventing an entire falling away.

3. And yet once more, as "Stewards, to feed and provide for the Lord's family." The whole

guardianship and dispensation of the Blessed Sacrament is in these figures gathered up and expressed. I do not refer now to the frequency of Celebration of Holy Communion, although I never lose an opportunity of declaring my conviction that such Celebration should be weekly in every Church, the Breaking of Bread on the Lord's Day being the rule of our own Church as it was of the Church of the Apostles; but I refer rather to the preparation of Communicants and the regulating their approach to it. It must never be lost sight of that, as Stewards of the Mysteries of God, we have to guard the Sacraments themselves from the profanation of unworthy reception; but looking at the subject from the opposite side, it is most important that, whilst we urge our people to become a Communicating people and dissuade them from standing aloof through mistaken fears, we should do nothing which might tend to bring them to the Altar of God in a cold, idle, perfunctory manner, or to lower the wholesome idea which most happily prevails amongst the working classes, that a Communicant ought to be a religious man, a careful liver.

Hence it belongs to the Clergyman to advise young Communicants especially as to preparation for their

Communions, and as to abstaining from Communion if there has been anything in their recent life or conduct which should unfit them for partaking on any particular occasion; for while on the one hand, we have to form in them a habit of Communicating, on the other hand, we must suggest such restraints as will make reception not a mere mechanical compliance with a rule. Different dispositions of mind, different degrees of intellectual and spiritual development, will require as great variety of treatment in respect of the Heavenly Food as different bodily constitutions require in regard to earthly nutriment. And it belongs to the Parish Priest here to be the physician of the soul, feeding each separate member of the Lord's family according to his spiritual need.

And so I revert, in conclusion, to the words of the Ordination Service, "Have in remembrance into how high a Dignity and to how weighty an Office and Charge ye are called." The measure of that dignity and importance is the measure of our responsibility "Christ," says one, "makes over to each of you a special portion of His vineyard to cultivate for immortality. For that definite allotment and for every soul therein we shall have to answer." Eternal destinies are suspended on our hourly work; every ill-spent day is a robbery of Him Whose chief reward

for all the "travail of His soul" is the multitude that we train for His glory. Called to be Stewards of His household, shall we lay waste His inheritance, or let it lie fallow and unproductive? Shall we not rather keep ever before us that day of final Visitation, when the Chief Shepherd and Bishop shall appear to inspect the accounts of our stewardship, and require the blood of the unwarned at the hand of the faithless watchman?

THE END.

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